CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

STATE of the WORLD

With regard to the

THEORY of RELIGION,

IN THREE PARTS.

I. Want of *Univerſality* in Natural and Reveal'd Religion, no juſt Objection againſt either.

II. The Scheme of Divine Providence with regard to the *Time* and *Manner* of the ſeveral Diſpenſations of Reveal'd Religion, more eſpecially the *Chriſtian.*

III. The Progreſs of Natural Religion and Science, or the continual Improvement of the *World in general.*

The Second Edition enlarg'd.

To which is added

A Diſcourſe upon the Life and Character of CHRIST.

By EDMUND LAW, D.D.
Archdeacon of *Carliſle.*

CAMBRIDGE,
Printed by J. BENTHAM Printer to the Univerſity, for W. THURLBOURN Bookſeller in *Cambridge*, and J. BEECROFT in Lombard-Street, *London.*

MDCCXLIX.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

30h

TO

The Right Honourable

HENRY

Lord Viſcount *Lonſdale*,

Theſe Diſcourſes

Are moſt humbly Dedicated,

In Teſtimony of that Veneration which is due to His LORDSHIP's general Character,

AND

As a Token of Gratitude for his particular Favours to the Author.

PREFACE.

THE following Diſcourſes were originally part of a much larger Deſign, tending to ſhew that Arts and Sciences, Natural and Reveal'd Religion, have upon the whole always been progreſſive, from the Creation of the World to the preſent Time; as alſo that they have been ſuited to each other, as well as to the Circumſtances of Mankind, during each Period of this their Progreſſion. A Theory, which when fairly repreſented, I have been aſſured would give ſome ſatisfaction to many, who being convinc'd of the Exiſtence and Attributes of one ſupreme firſt Cauſe, yet are ſo unhappy as to entertain ſtrong Prejudices againſt every kind of Revelation, chiefly on account of the Circumſtances under which it was ſuppoſed to have been communicated, which they are unable to reconcile with the Courſe and Order of Divine Providence in all other reſpects; as well as to thoſe who are equally at a loſs in ſearching after any ſettled Order or Deſign in either of theſe Eſtabliſhments: but yet if they could once perſwade themſelves in general, that one of theſe proceeded in ſome ſort of uniform Ratio *and* Analogy *with the other, and that both were in a State of regular* Progreſſion, *would have Patience to wait a*

while

while in hopes of seeing their particular Objections gradually removed in each by the same Rules.

I had formerly attempted to clear up some of the chief Difficulties that occur in our Conceptions of the Deity and his Providence, in some Observations on ABp. King's *Essay on the* Origin of Evil; *and have since had the pleasure of seeing that System adopted by a late celebrated Writer, and esteemed worthy of being adorn'd with all the Graces of Poetry: This is in some respects a Continuation of the same design. But being now in a great measure cut off from such Books as were necessary to complete it, I could only draw the Plan and Outlines, and was forced to content myself with venturing this abroad in the present Form, (though very sensible that it is not the most inviting to such Readers as are above mention'd,) rather than be at the pains of throwing it into one close continued Treatise; especially as I cannot think that my present stock of Materials would have been sufficient to have given that its due proportions, and several things must then have been retrench'd, which this more popular Form admits: Some of these probably will seem Repetitions; and yet perhaps be excused, as they come in on different Occasions, and help to set the same Thought in different, and, 'tis hoped, not altogether disagreeable Views.*

When

PREFACE.

When I conſider the Temper of thoſe Perſons for whoſe uſe the following Papers chiefly are intended, I am encouraged to hope that none of my Brethren will eaſily take offence at the freedom I have been obliged to uſe, in cenſuring ſome things which ſeem'd to be the greateſt obſtacles to this Progreſs of Religious Knowledge, as well as to hinder both ourſelves and others from perceiving it.

Nor will it, I truſt, be requiſite to make any farther Apology for the Defects of the Performance, which are but too natural on ſo very extenſive a Subject in ſuch hands. As it is, I hope it may prove ſufficient to give general hints in each part of the Scheme propoſed, and thereby put ſome others on finiſhing what ſhall upon examination bear the teſt. If the Foundation itſelf ſhould appear to be faulty, here is already too much built upon it; ſince the Conſequences of the whole are pretty obvious.

I.

Want of *Univerſality*

IN

Natural and Reveal'd Religion

No juſt Objection againſt either.

Are not my Ways equal? Ezek. 18. 29.

Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not alſo of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles alſo.

Rom. 3. 29.

ACTS xvii. 30.

And the Times of this Ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where to repent.

THESE words contain a Declaration of God's gracious intent to reform Mankind by the coming of *Chriſt*, and at the ſame time intimate the preference due to His above any former Inſtitution.

In the foregoing Verſes the Apoſtle had been inſtructing the *Athenians* in the Nature of the true God, and his univerſal Providence. He ſhews them that there is one common Father and Governor of the world, who has made this Earth a fit habitation for the ſons of men and diſtributed them all over the face of it; who has diſtinguiſhed the Seaſons and divided the Nations, and fix'd the bounds and periods of each, in ſo regular and wiſe a manner, as might lead all diligent obſervers of them to a knowledge of their Author; and put them upon ſeeking out ſome method of expreſſing their Devotion to him. Though here in fact, (as the Apoſtle intimates, ℣. 27.) they were all but like men groping in the dark, their notions of the Deity very imperfect and obſcure; their wor-

ſhip highly abſurd and irrational. This their Ignorance God was pleaſed for ſome time to *wink at*, (ὑπεριδειν) to overlook, diſregard, or as it is in a parallel place, * *He ſuffered them to walk in their own ways*, to wander in the ſeveral mazes they had brought themſelves into; the various ſects of Superſtition and Idolatry under which they had fallen: but now he *commandeth all men every where to repent*; or rather publiſhes, (παραγγελλει) proclaims the Tidings of Salvation to all men upon the terms of Repentance; he offers a new Covenant to Mankind in general, from the benefits of which none are abſolutely excluded who ſincerely deſire them.——*Tidings*, which ought to be received by all, as they were by the firſt *Chriſtians*, with Joy and Thankfulneſs. But how ſtrangely has the face of things been altered, or rather the nature of them inverted ſince! When through the degeneracy of mankind the benefits of this Divine Inſtitution become reſtrained to a few Nations, and even theſe are taught to deſpiſe it, for that very reaſon which uſes to make a benefit the more valuable, namely becauſe it is reſtrained to themſelves.

If, ſay the preſent Unbelievers, *God has made of one blood all Nations of men, and is no re-*

* Acts 14. 16.

ſpecter

ſpector of Perſons; and if he deſigns this Revelation for all men, as he muſt, if it be of ſo great uſe and advantage to them;—Why then is it not actually communicated to all?—Why did he ſo long, why does he ſtill, *wink at* the Ignorance of ſo many Nations, and leave them without any means of coming to the Knowledge of his Truth? Can a God of infinite power and wiſdom be diſappointed in his aim? Or will the common Father of mankind confine his greateſt mercies to ſo few of his Children?—And thus every Argument of the ſuperior excellency of our Religion is made an objection to its Divine Authority; and what ſhould be a particular motive of Gratitude for having received it, is turned into the ſtrongeſt reaſon for rejecting it.

In my following Diſcourſe I ſhall conſider that part of this Objection which relates to the *Manner* of the *Chriſtian* Diſpenſation; the other which more immediately affects the *Time* of its delivery, muſt be reſerved to a more full examination afterwards.

In anſwer therefore to this part of the foregoing difficulty, I ſhall endeavour to prove in the firſt place,

I. That a *partial Communication* of Chriſtianity can be no particular Objection to its Divine

Authority, ſince the Religion of Nature is on the ſame foot with it in this reſpect.

II. I propoſe to ſhew the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of the Divine Conduct in the Diſpenſation of them both: And

III. The great Benefit of complying with the Terms of the Goſpel, and the Inexcuſableneſs of rejecting it.

I. I am to ſhew that a *partial Communication* of Chriſtianity can be no particular objection to its Divine Authority, ſince the Religion of Nature is on the ſame foot with it in this reſpect.

As the all-wiſe Creator of the Univerſe has been pleaſed to frame different *Orders* of intellectual Beings, ſo he has made a conſiderable difference among thoſe of the ſame order. In *Mankind* the caſe is very evident. We cannot but obſerve a vaſt diſparity between both the *Abilities* and *Advantages* of ſome men, and thoſe of others; their *Tempers* of body and *Powers* of mind, and *Circumſtances* in the world; their *Education*, *Opportunities*, and *Ways of Life*; the *Station* they are in, or the *Government* they live under. —— Now theſe are ſo many Talents which together make up our portion of *Reaſon*, and ſeverally contribute to the

the forming our Underſtanding, and improving our *Nature*. As theſe then are ſo very unequally diſtributed, 'tis plain that our Religious Notions, or our *Law of Nature*, muſt be very different and unequal alſo. The bounds of Duty will be as various as the degrees of Knowledge in every man, and likewiſe be enlarged in proportion to the gradual Improvements in the ſame man.

To ſpeak therefore of one *fixt*, *immutable*, and *univerſal* Law of Nature, is framing an imaginary Scheme without the leaſt foundation in the nature of things; directly contrary to the preſent order of the whole Creation: 'Tis making the ſame Rule ſuit Beings in all Circumſtances; which is full as abſurd as to preſcribe the ſame food and phyſic to all Conſtitutions. —— To ſtile this Religion of Nature abſolutely *perfect*, or its Light *ſufficient*, can only mean, that every one may be as perfect here as God intended him to be, and able to do all that his Maker will require of him, or as much as is ſufficient to excuſe him from *puniſhment*; which is very true, but nothing to the purpoſe: for this kind of Perfection is far from implying an univerſal, unchangeable Equality in the *Law of Nature*, or excluding greater Light; ſince it may be very conſiſtent with that

diverſity of Talents abovementioned, and thoſe different degrees of Happineſs and Perfection, which are founded in, and naturally conſequent upon it. As therefore all the Gifts of Nature are diſtributed in this partial and unequal manner, How unreaſonable is it to object againſt reveal'd Religion, for its being conveyed in the very ſame manner! One who believed any thing of a God and his Providence, would naturally ſuppoſe that if a Revelation were to be made at all, it would be made according to the ſame method which is obſerved in the Government of the natural and moral world; at leaſt, he that allows this method to be conſiſtent with the Belief of a Deity in the one, cannot ſurely on that account reject the other. [a]

[a] Mr. *Chubb* [Diſcourſe on Miracles, p. 48, *&c.*] endeavours to invalidate this obſervation, by aſſerting, that the two Caſes are not parallel, becauſe the one could not have been better conſtituted; which he thinks cannot be made appear concerning the other. But if we ſhew that the like or greater Inconveniences would flow from any other aſſignable way of conveying Revelation (which will be attempted in the following part of this Diſcourſe) then we have as much reaſon to aſſert that it could not upon the whole have been conveyed in a better way; and conſequently the objection drawn from its want of Univerſality will be of no more force than that from Inequality is in the common Courſe of Nature; and the two Caſes will ſtill be exactly parallel.

Thus

Thus much may be ſufficient to ſhew that natural and reveal'd Religion are upon the ſame foot in point of *Univerſality*, and that the Objection holds equally againſt both of them. And I have been the more brief on this Head, as it has been ſo fully diſcuſſed of late by very able writers. *

II. I proceed therefore in the ſecond place, to point out the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of the Divine Conduct in the Diſpenſation of them both.

1ſt. Of Natural Religion, which as we have ſeen, is proportionable to the different Abilities and Attainments of Mankind; as theſe are alſo to their different Stations and Conditions; both which we ſhall find exquiſitely ſuited to the well-being of the World.

For in the firſt place, *Society* is requiſite in order to ſupply the Conveniences, the Comforts and the Neceſſaries of Life, as well as to ſecure the quiet uſe, and ſafe poſſeſſion of them. To preſerve Society, among ſuch frail fallible Creatures, there is need of *Government*, which implies

* See Dr. *Conybeare*'s, Mr. *Foſter*'s, or *S. Browne*'s *Defence of Revelation*, or Dr. *Denne*'s Sermon on the Propagation of the Goſpel, or more at large in Bp. *Butler*'s *Analogy of Religion*, &c. pag. 181. 215, *&c.* Octavo.

dif-

different Stations and Conditions; as theſe again call for different Abilities and Qualifications. All, 'tis plain, cannot be Governours, nor enjoy the Benefits which attend ſome Poſts of Wealth and Power: the *many* have nothing left them but to obey, to execute the Will of their Superiors, and undergo the Drudgeries of Life.*

The ſame holds in the Body politic as in the natural, there muſt be many inferior and *more feeble Members*, which yet are *neceſſary*; *neither can the Head ſay to the Feet I have no need of you.*——But now, if all theſe different Members of the World had naturally the ſelf-ſame Senſe and Reliſh of things; if each Man had originally and unchangeably the higheſt degree of Underſtanding and Acuteneſs; the greateſt ſtrength of Reaſon and fineneſs of Imagination, that is to be met with in any of the Species; how very unequal and incongruous muſt this unavoidable diverſity of Orders prove! How hard would be the caſe of them whoſe lot is to fill the worſt and loweſt Offices, and

* "Illi ergo omnes conditi ſunt ut hæc opera præſtent, "quibus in Civitate opus eſt; conditus eſt autem Vir "ſcientiâ præditus ſui gratia: atque ita ſimul colitur "Terra, et reperitur Sapientia. Quam ſcite ergo dixit "ille, quiſquis fuit, *Niſi eſſent ſtulti deſolaretur Terra? Maimon.* Porta *Moſ.* p. 41. Eccluſ. 38. 32. 34. *Nich. Klim.* p. 133, &c.

yet

yet who find themſelves as well qualified for and as highly deſerving too of the beſt, (ſince on this ſuppoſition, which leaves it ſo very little in any one's power to improve or benefit either himſelf or others, there could ſcarce be any real deſert at all) as thoſe that hold them, and who likewiſe cannot but be as deeply ſenſible of all that miſery and hardſhip which ariſes from the want of them! The common Intellect and Apprehenſion of Man would be but ill placed in an *Ox* or *Aſs*; nor would the genius and temper of ſome philoſophic mind be any better ſuited to *him that driveth them, and is occupied in all their labours.*

But this muſt neceſſarily be the ſtate of things, if all men were by nature furniſhed with all thoſe rational or intellectual Accompliſhments, which adorn ſome few of them at preſent. Three parts in four of the world muſt be unfit for their particular Circumſtances, and at odds with their Condition. How inconſiſtent alſo would it be in Nature to implant thoſe various Senſes, Appetites and Taſtes in all men, which not one in a thouſand would have power to gratify!—That ſublime degree of Reaſon and Reflection, which could only prove its own tormentor! Not to mention what ill influence ſuch a Scheme would have on Government itſelf;

itſelf; how difficult it muſt be to rule where every one has the ſame Strength and Skill; how hard to obey, when all have equal Abilities, and therefore (as they might think) an equal right to be their own Directors. In ſhort, how much more wiſe and beneficial is the preſent Conſtitution of things! Where all is left to Mankind themſelves, who have both the *forming* and *diſpoſing* of each other; nay where Men are at liberty in a great meaſure to frame their own Natures, and Diſpoſitions: where they have no inconvenient or pernicious Principle to lay to Nature's Charge; * no properly innate *Notions* or implanted *Inſtincts*; ‡ no truly natural *Appetite* or *Affection*, to ſway or byaſs them; except that univerſal Senſe, and ſtrong Deſire of *Happineſs*, which was abſolutely neceſſary to their Preſervation. [b] By theſe means we have at firſt only

* See *Ibbot*'s *Boyle*'s *Lect.* 2d ſett, ſerm. 5. p. 143. *&c.* or A. Bp. *King*'s *Origin of Evil*, Note 38. p. 211. 2d Edit.

‡ See the Prelim. Diſſert. to *King*'s *Origin of Evil*, and rem. 1. p. 87, 88. 2d Edit.

[b] To form ſome notion of this, let it be obſerved, that when the firſt foundation of a diverſity of Senſe and Intellect is once laid in a greater or leſs ſuſceptibility of Pleaſure or Pain, by a *Perception* of *Ideas* more acute or dull, more quick or ſlow, and a proportioned *Reflection* on them, (which proportion, by the bye, between theſe two Powers [of perceiving and reflecting] is, I believe, in each perſon pretty

ſuch Thoughts and Inclinations inſtilled into our Minds as are agreeable to, and for the moſt part do in fact ariſe from our Place and Circumſtances in the World; and afterwards find room enough to refine, improve and enlarge our Faculties; to qualify ourſelves for, as well as by a right Application of them, to merit ſome ſuperior Station, whenever it ſhall become void. How regular and beautiful a Subordination muſt this produce! How fitly might the *whole Body thus knit together and compacted, by that which every Joint ſupplieth, increaſe with the Increaſe of God*, would Man but enter into the ſame great Plan of exciting Induſtry and Labour, and do what lies in his own Power to promote it; *viz.* entail Benefits and Succeſſes as the natural conſequence of theſe; and endeavour to ſuit every one's Station to his reſpective Merit and

pretty exactly kept up, as to the pitch of their Vivacity in both the abovenamed reſpects, i. e. the *Force* and *Time* of their ſucceſſive Operations, or the Momentum and Velocity of their reſpective Objects)—from hence the whole Tribe of *Affections* &c. and the ſeveral Degrees in each, are very apparently deducible: ſuppoſing only this, I ſay, which ſeems to lie in the *original Stamina* of the Body, and is ſo far not to be accounted for, at leaſt by me; which therefore, and which only, I ſhould term *innate*, or ſtrictly *natural*; ſince every thing beſides, that is comprehended under the name of *Natural Appetite* &c. is properly ſo far from being ſuch, that it is evidently poſterior

in

Abilities; *i. e.* deal with each perſon according to what *he is*, and obſerve thoſe Rules which the great God of Nature has eſtabliſhed!

in the Order of Nature, and entirely grounded on the *Ideas* which themſelves ariſe from hence, and whoſe *innateneſs* in all ſenſes of that word is now generally given up: — ſuppoſing then this one foundation laid by Nature, a difference herein will be enough to conſtitute the Being more or leſs ſenſible, or rational in general; and tend to make it more or leſs *paſſionate* or *mild*, eager or indolent &c. in whatſoever it applies itſelf to; but can this ever actually determine it to any one peculiar ſett of Objects, or have any tendency towards giving what we mean by a particular Genius, Taſte, or Temper? That, and the whole Conſtitution of the Human Mind, or its predominant Qualities, ſeem to ariſe afterwards from the particular *Aſſociations* which we form ourſelves, or learn of others, as theſe grow gradually, and even mechanically from the Circumſtances we are in, or from thoſe Objects that more immediately ſurround and ſtrike us; provided that a ſuitable *Attention* and regard be paid to each as it preſents itſelf. For that amidſt all this Mechanic Apparatus we have ſuch a diſtinct Faculty of *attending*, and determining the ſubordinate Powers in conſequence thereof, as is ſtated at large by A. Bp. *King*, I muſt beg leave to ſuppoſe, till all theſe various Appearances, which ſeem ſo much to require it (of which in the following note *.) are ſolv'd on other Principles; and then indeed this, which, it muſt be own'd, contains ſomething inexplicable, will be of courſe excluded. I may add here, that neither are thoſe *Aſſociations* themſelves, from whence ſome very ingenious Perſons would deduce a total Mechaniſm, altogether *neceſſary*; nor we ſo far paſſive under them, as to be left without a power of curbing and correcting, breaking and eradicating; as well as of contracting

What Emulation muſt this raiſe, join'd with the utmoſt care and caution, when each finds it in his power ſo much to improve and advance,

tracting them at firſt, and afterwards confirming them: to aſſert this would be advancing a new Doctrine of *Habits*, contrary to the general Senſe and Language of Mankind.

Well then, allowing ſuch a degree of Liberty, or active Power to be joined with the other paſſive Ingredients in our Compoſition, as ſuch, it muſt in ſome meaſure act independently on each of them, and be capable of forming new *Aſſociations* from its own proper Acts, which will extend to all the reſt and influence them; and yet as it will alſo have ſome ſuch ſort of connection with them all, as to be itſelf in ſome reſpect or other influenc'd by them reciprocally, or (which comes to the ſame thing) the *Mind* will be ſo far affected in, and through them as to influence it, which we all daily feel: [elſe how come theſe parts of our Conſtitution to be conſtantly applied to with ſucceſs for the determination of it? Why is Pain preſent or in proſpect uſed to move a Man, or Arguments and Motives urg'd, if they are really Matters of indifference to his *Choice*, and have no manner of effect upon it?] As this grows and gaters ſtrength, like all our other Faculties; and is equally capable of being impaired, and rectified again: (*King*, Note X. p. 406, 407. 3d Edit.)—As it is limited and ſubject to its Laws, not perhaps wholly different, though of a kind diſtinct, from thoſe of the other Appetites: (however ſuch as make it no leſs governable, ibid. c. 5. § 5. ſub. 4. p. 420, &c. with notes 70, p. 417. and 71, p. 422, 423.) and cannot go againſt theſe Appetites without manifeſt pain and miſery to the perſon: ib. Not. N. p. 336, &c.——As it may be inclined, both by them and its own courſe of Operation, and will become daily more and more con-

as well as to impair and debase his *Nature*; and thereby also change his *State!* what eagerness to excell some! what dread of falling below others! what provocation for all, to make the

conformed to them, by due regular exercise, which we likewise experience;—its Operations will become as much the Objects of Foreknowledge; nor will it be much less easy to account for either the Formation, or *Increase* of any particular Turn of Mind, in any given situation, than if all were performed in us necessarily, and at once.

This Plan of Human Nature, which derives every thing from so few Principles, and yet makes room for that endless Variety conspicuous in it, might, I am sensible, and will shortly, I believe, be set in a good light, and shewn to be free from some of the greatest Difficulties that must clog all others. In this view a just Uniformity is, by the Deity so far as he acts, always, and might be by us, preserved among all its constituent parts; our Talents suited to our Capacity of using them; our Sphere enlarged, as that increases; and regularly keeping pace with our Improvements; each Dispensation put upon a reasonable foot; and all Discoveries made in due proportion to our Qualifications for judging of them, and our Dispositions to apply them. Whereas the contrary Scheme, of bringing all things to an original, equal, and immediate Intuition; or of fixing every Man to certain Impulses, or Instincts, independent on his Station and Endeavours, and intirely unimprovable by them; this must be quite arbitrary, and in a great measure useless; and attended with all the inconsistencies and inconveniencies already mentioned. Such would the Consequences be of that pretended *Universal Equability*, in Natural Religion; nor is the levelling Scheme, so much contended for in Revelation, less absurd, as will appear below.

best

beſt uſe of their Faculties and Opportunities! This amicable Conteſt, this perpetual Struggle, muſt certainly make more for the good of the whole, than if all had been paſſive, and abſolutely fix'd in any degree of Knowledge and Perfection, or limited unalterably to any State. [a]Upon this Plan only could there be place for Hope or Fear, Reward or Puniſhment, the only proper means of governing free, rational Agents; and of conducting them to their ſupreme and trueſt Happineſs, which ſeems entirely to conſiſt in Agency; and which can only this way be excited[b]. This therefore is the method moſt agreeable to Wiſdom and Goodneſs, and conſequently moſt worthy of God.

[a] See King's *Origin of Evil*, Note 19. p. 121, *&c.* and Note Y. p. 449, *&c.* We may add that the ſuppoſition of any ſuch fixed, unimprovable State of natural Good implies, ſtrictly ſpeaking, no leſs than the Subverſion of all Virtue, or *Moral* Good; which is nothing but the chuſing to communicate the former: [See *King*, R. 1. p. 84, 85. 3d Edit.] for which Communication there could be no place in ſuch a State, nor conſequently any room for any of thoſe Ideas which are founded on it. Nor does this Scheme any better conſult the Intereſt of our *Intellectual* accompliſhments; which while it ſeems to be exalting them, is at the bottom taking away their Uſe and Exerciſe; while it pretends to conſtitute an equality among Rational Agents, is really deſtructive of both Rationality, and Agency.

[b] See *King*, p. 241, 338, 350, 368, 379, 393, *&c.* with the following Note [c].

[c] Having thus far conſidered the partial Diſtribution of the Gifts of Nature, and by conſequence the Diverſity of Natural Religion, and offered ſome Hints towards explaining the Reaſonableneſs and Neceſſity thereof; I proceed to ſhew the ſame concerning *Revelation.*

If a Revelation were to be made at all (and I muſt here take it for granted that ſuch a thing is neither impoſſible nor altogether unreaſonable in itſelf, which I think may be fairly done, after what has been wrote upon the ſubject, both by Dr. *Jenkin*, vol. 1. c. 1. and the ingenious Author of an *Enquiry into the Evidence of the Chriſtian Religion*, §. 8.) it muſt either be conveyed in the method we are told it was, namely, at firſt communicated to ſome few ſelect Perſons, and by them divulg'd, and gradually propagated to the reſt of the world[d]; or ſecondly, every

[c] See this deſcribed more at large in Bp. *Butler*'s *Analogy*, p. 93, *&c.* 2d Edit.

[d] Mr. *Chubb* (on Miracles, p. 68, *&c.*) objects to this firſt method, that hereby it would be in the power of a few men to deprive the reſt of all the benefits of this Revelation. But is not that really the caſe in all the other Benefits of Nature and the ordinary Gifts of Providence? Are not moſt of the Bleſſings of Life communicated to us by the mediation and inſtrumentality of other men, who may be juſt and faithful in communicating them, or otherwiſe? and is it not oft in the power of a ſingle perſon to deprive

particular man muſt have it by immediate Inſpiration, and be at all times, and in all caſes, influenced and directed to it internally; or thirdly, it muſt be publiſhed again and again, and

deprive Multitudes of Life itſelf or any of its comforts, of Liberty, Peace, Plenty, Arts, Improvements, &c. and is not all this unavoidable while men are allowed the free uſe of their natural Powers, which Mr. *Chubb* contends for? Men, he ſays, *are not to be over-ruled* in either the Publication or Reception of Religion; and if ſo, he has yet to explain how that is to be given ſo as not *to leave it in the power and pleaſure of a few*, ſooner or later, to reſtrain and ſuppreſs, to diſguiſe and corrupt it; and conſequently *to prevent thouſands and millions of others from ſharing in the benefits thereof.* ib. p. 63. On a little farther conſideration Mr. *Chubb* may probably find that in this Scheme [*i. e.* of Human Liberty] it muſt be impoſſible for any thing relating either to the Minds, or outward Circumſtances of Mankind, to remain in a ſtate of perfect Uniformity; and then he may be ſenſible too that the ſame Cauſes, which among other things that concern Mankind, make their Religion unavoidably continue in this partial and unequal way, will hold as ſtrongly for its being originally given in the ſame way.

Mr. *Chubb*'s ſecond Objection, that if Men could be ſuppoſed to be honeſt and faithful in the publication of a Syſtem of Revealed Religion, then there would be no occaſion for ſuch Syſtem, ib. ſeems to be worſe founded than the other; ſince this Revelation, notwithſtanding all the Imperfections that attend its communication, may ſtill be the means of conveying ſuch ſuperior Benefits to thoſe who do come to the knowledge of it, of making ſuch Diſcoveries in the Nature both of God and Man, and of af-

freſh Miracles worked for the Conviction of each Unbeliever in every Age.

In the Second of theſe methods the Inconveniences are very obvious: for Firſt, This Influence, of what kind ſoever it be, muſt either be abſolutely efficacious and irreſiſtable, *i. e.* ſo ſtrong as to ſubvert the natural Powers of Man, and take away his Freedom of thinking and acting; and conſequently deſtroy all Virtue, Merit, Praiſe, Reward; *i. e.* all that is good and valu-

fording Motives for Man's attaining to ſuch a degree of Virtue, and true rational Happineſs, as all their Honeſty, without ſuch helps, could never raiſe the generality of them to. And whether the *ſole* end of Revelation be to bring men to a higher pitch of happineſs than they could otherwiſe attain, or not: ib. p. 49. this Author never can prove but that this may be *one* of its great *ends*, and that this End is in fact obtained, to as high a Degree as is conſiſtent with his own Scheme of perfect Liberty; ſo that, in the laſt place, allowing God to *foreſee* all the Conſequences, and Events attending ſuch an Eſtabliſhment, ib. p. 62. yet this Eſtabliſhment ſo circumſtanced may, notwithſtanding any thing this Author has made out to the contrary, come from him. And indeed Mr. *Chubb* ſeems at length to be ſenſible of that ſame boaſted *Objection againſt the Divinity of a Revelation from its non-univerſality* being ſo *very much weakened*, that he is grown rather weary of it, and willing to get rid of it as handſomely as he can, by pretending that he has not even *lean'd to that ſide of the Queſtion* in all his Debates upon it, and will take it *unkindly* to have ſuch a thing ſo much as *inſinuated of him*. The Author's Farewell, p. 219. Note.

able

able in Religion: or elſe it would not be ſufficient to anſwer the ends propoſed; nor could it certainly and effectually ſecure the Intereſt and Salvation of Mankind. As an *Illumination* it muſt either be diſtinguiſhable from the preſent Effects of Reaſon and the ordinary Operations of the Divine Spirit, or not; if the former, this muſt be ſtriking us more forcibly, and working a more aſſured, infallible Conviction in the Mind: but as much as is added to that, above what may ariſe from the preſent Conſtitution of things, juſt ſo much muſt be taken from the preſent Choice, and Merit of believing; and the concomitant Delight and Satisfaction which we feel, and ought to feel, in giving our Aſſent to Truth [c]. Such evidence muſt either ſuperſede

[c] See Abp. *King*'s Origin, N. 19. p. 128, *&c.* 3d Edit. compared with N. 58. p. 349. Whence it appears that though in ſome caſes and reſpects the Aſſent be unavoidable, and we merely paſſive in the Attainment of many uſeful parts of Knowledge; and which muſt be attended with ſome ſatisfaction in degree proportioned to the apprehenſion of that uſefulneſs, and of a Kind perhaps very complex, as ariſing from variety of cauſes accidentally aſſociated; yet neither is the kind nor the degree of this Delight ſo intenſe, and exquiſite as that which uſually accompanies thoſe points which we work out ourſelves, which we properly make *our own*, by a free, fair inveſtigation. Theſe Truths, though of no more importance in themſeves or conſequences, than any others that are either forcibly obtruded on us, or fortuitouſly thrown into our way, yet

all Action and Enquiry of our own, and overbear the Judgement beyond poſſibility of Doubt, (which yet, from the manner of our acquiring and aſſociating Ideas and forming judgements, is impoſſible to be conceived, without reverſing the whole frame of the human Mind; neither would that appear to be at all deſirable, as we have ſeen above) it muſt I ſay, either be inconſiſtent with the exerciſe of our other moſt valuable Faculties, or it would come to the ſame thing with the preſent uſe of them; and prove alike capable of being equally neglected or oppos'd, corrupted or deſtroy'd: it would have no other or higher Evidence than in ſome caſes the common Principles of Reaſon have; nor could it lay any ſtronger Obligation on us to obey its

are attended with a ſort of ſelf approbation, and complacency, which both accompanys the firſt Diſcovery, the tranſporting εὑρηκα; and will continue after it, and bear Reflection; and which makes them infinitely exceed all others in our eſtimation. The ſame thing, as it is come at in the one or the other of theſe ways, is evidently not the ſame to us: which I can aſcribe to nothing more than a conſciouſneſs that in the former caſe we have contributed ſomewhat to the acquiſition of it, and to our own improvement by that acquiſition; or an Idea of *Merit*, conſtantly aſſociated with this kind of Acquiſitions, and which is perhaps the very ſtrongeſt, and the moſt agreeable of all our *Aſſociations*. From whence alſo we may collect how neceſſary it is to the Happineſs of Man that he ſhould appear to himſelf to be *free*, in the Exerciſe of the Faculties

of

Dictates. The ſame will be the caſe with it conſidered as an *Impulſe*, or Impreſſion on the Mind, inciting it to follow each determination of the Judgement, and phyſically connecting Thought with Action; ſince this Connection, if much altered from that which is obſervable in the preſent State, or increaſed to any conſiderable Degree above that Harmony which now ſubſiſts among our natural Powers, would be attended with the very ſame Conſequences. *. Farther, as all this muſt be tranſacted in a Man's own breaſt, and ſo long as it is limited as above, or he retains the leaſt degree of Liberty, is capable of being ſtifled there; every one might, and moſt probably would ſoon diſregard it, as much as he

of his Mind, as well as the Powers of his Body; to be in ſome degree active in the Attainment of his Knowledge, as well as any other Attainments; and how far this will go towards proving him to be really ſo, I leave to be conſidered. If he has any real Liberty, there will be a good reaſon for annexing this double Pleaſure to the exerciſe of it, both to excite him to Action in caſes of Difficulty, and afterwards to juſtify him for engaging in ſuch; and enable him to go through all the Toil, and Hazard that attends them. If he has none, won't it be a little hard to point out, either the Riſe or Reaſonableneſs of this ſo conſtant, and ſo general a Deluſion; and to account for ſuch Ideas as thoſe of Merit, Eſteem, Reward, *&c.* which are entirely founded in it?

* See Mr. *Hutcheſon* on the Paſſions, p. 179, 200, *&c.* or *King*'s Eſſay, N. 28, *&c.*

does now the many good Thoughts, Motions and Suggeſtions, which ariſe daily in his Mind. Nor is there leſs likelihood of its being perverted to the worſt of purpoſes, as Intereſt, Vice, or Vanity might direct:—of its ſoon filling the World with rank *Enthuſiaſm*, or the moſt wicked and abſurd *Impoſtures*; and when it is thus once perverted, there ſeems to be no room for any remedy upon this Scheme; no means are left us to detect the Fraud, or Folly of any religious pretences whatſoever; no method of reſcuing Mankind from perpetual Deluſion [f].

[f] The ingenious Author of *Chriſtianity not founded on Argument*, ſeems to adopt this ſecond method of communicating a Religion to Mankind, and carries it ſo far as to ſuperſede all other Means, Divine or Human, that have ever been made uſe of to ſupport it in the World. He contends for *a conſtant and particular Revelation imparted ſeparately and ſupernaturally to every Individual*, p. 112. This he terms *Inſpiration* and *infuſed Evidence*, p. 58. *feeling* and *internal Senſe*, ib. and *of a nature but little differing from that of Intuition*, p. 59. In ſhort, it is what will diſpatch the whole buſineſs of Religion at once, without either *Time* or *Teaching*, p. 17. reading or reaſoning, the uſe of our Underſtandings, or the Evidence of our Senſes.—'Tis hard to gueſs upon what Plan this Author would defend himſelf if he were preſſed, but for the preſent he admits one general external Revelation to have been made and recorded [though both upon his Principles muſt have been extremely unneceſſary] and yet labours to diſſwade us from examining the Contents of it, and moſt inconſiſtently attempts to ſhew, as well from Reaſon as

Nor, in the Third place, would leſs Inconveniences attend the frequent republication of Religion, and working new Miracles for the

as this very Revelation, that we ought not to imploy our Reaſon at all either in the Proof or the Interpretation of it, or in any thing elſe relating to the Subject, p. 7, *&c.* A ſelf-deſtructive Scheme! which were it really, as he would prove, laid down by *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles*, and in the *Nature of the thing* or from the *Practice of Mankind* ever ſo neceſſary, yet could not poſſibly be kept clear of the Conſequences abovemention'd, of which more hereafter. But that this is far from being the caſe may eaſily be ſhewn. That *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles both encourage and enjoin the exerciſe of Reaſon in Religious Matters is plain enough from theſe few Texts, *Matth.* 13. 19, 23. *Mark* 8. 17, 18. *Luke* 1, 4. 12, 57. *John* 5, 39. *Acts* 17. 11,17. *Rom.* 10, 17. 11, 1. 1*Cor.* 10,15. 14,29. 2*Cor.* 13,5. 1*Tim.* 4. 13,14,15. 2*Tim.* 3, 15. 1*John* 4, 1. 1*Pet.* 3, 15. Do ſuch Texts as theſe ſuppoſe *Conviction to precede the Evidence?* p. 37. to which add 1*Theſſ.* 5, 21. where S. *Paul* treating of *Spiritual Gifts* themſelves, exhorts his followers to *prove all things* [a hopeful Taſk! ſays our Author p.76.] and *Rom.* 10, 2. where the ſame great Apoſtle is recommending *Zeal according to Knowledge*; though this Writer is pleaſed to tell us, that *ſuch Zeal will ſcarce ever deſerve the name*; p. 25. However, to give this extraordinary Scheme of his a ſcriptural air, he lays hold on ſome paſſages of Scripture Hiſtory [of which in their proper place] and draws in ſeveral detacht parts of ſtragling Texts about the Spirit of God, or ſuch as ſound that way, which he applies to his point indiſcriminately, whether they concern thoſe ordinary Aſſiſtances and imperceptible Operations that may be expected from the Holy Ghoſt in every Age, or

are

conviction of each particular perſon that might be ſuppos'd to want it; ſince theſe repeated Publications, when grown common, would in all probability be as little minded as the con-

are confined to his extraordinary, miraculous Gifts, that were, we think, peculiar to the firſt publication of the Goſpel, and produced thoſe wonderful Effects which this Writer alludes to; and which he, with ſome modern Sectaries, ſeems ſtill to claim upon that ever weak foundation of believing ſtrongly that he has the ſame, without being able to bring any of the ſame proofs in juſtification of ſuch Belief. Though even here he ought to be reminded that moſt of theſe very ſupernatural Gifts were ſo far from exerting themſelves independently on any natural Attainments, that they moſt commonly acted in conjunction with, and were adminiſtred conformably to ſuch, and were themſelves improved by Labour, Diligence and Study, or impaired and quite extinguiſhed by Neglect; [See *Whitby* and others, on 2 *Tim.* 1, 6.] that all of them were ſubject to the Will and Reaſon of thoſe who poſſeſſed them, and to be by them carefully and prudently applied to the particular Exigences of the Church, and the moſt uſeful Purpoſes of *Edifying*; ſo as to conſtitute the whole a *Reaſonable Service*. 'God, when he makes the Prophet, does 'not unmake the Man. He leaves all his Faculties in 'their natural ſtate, to enable him to judge of his In'ſpirations, whether they be of Divine Original or no. 'When he illuminates the Mind with ſupernatural Light 'he does not extinguiſh that which is natural. If he 'would have us aſſent to the Truth of any Propoſition, 'he either evidences that Truth by the uſual Methods of 'natural Reaſon, or elſe makes it known to be a Truth 'which he would have us aſſent to, by his Authority, and

'con-

ſtant preaching of it is at preſent. Such a continual ſeries of Miracles would in time be no Miracles at all, they muſt loſe all their force together with their Surpriſingneſs and Novelty;

'convinces us that it is from him, by ſome Marks which 'Reaſon cannot be miſtaken in. Reaſon muſt be our laſt 'Judge and Guide in every thing.' *Lock* on *Enthuſiaſm:* A Chapter which I would beg leave to recommend to this ingenious Writer; and when he ſhews us any of the ſame infallible *Marks* of Inſpiration, that were formerly exhibited; when he communicates ſome of that *infuſed Evidence*, which he can make appear not to have been derived from other Sources, we may be oblig'd implicitly to follow his Directions; but till then are, I humbly apprehend, at liberty to ſuppoſe that he himſelf is only *following his own Spirit, and has ſeen nothing*; and that all theſe *Feelings* are no more than the Effects of his own warm Imagination. For that the *ordinary* Operations of the Spirit do not ſuggeſt any thing of this kind, that they are never diſtinguiſhable from the natural workings of our Minds, much leſs in any reſpect ſubverſive of them; that they are perfectly conſiſtent with the moſt free uſe of all our rational Powers, which are the Gift of the ſame Author, and given to be ſo uſed by us; and that theſe generally attend upon their regular Exerciſe, and were deſigned rather to preſerve, aſſiſt, improve, than to obſtruct and ſuperſede it, is I think now pretty well agreed. See *King*'s *Origin of Evil*, N. 71. p. 422, &c. 3d Edit. Nor can he ſhew that Reaſon thus aſſiſted will be inſufficient for the purpoſes of true Religion, or make out from the *Nature* of theſe two, that they ought to have no Communication with each other. His firſt allegation, that Men by the exerciſe of their Reaſon do not, nor can be required to *think all alike*, will not come up to his point, as it is neither

nor could they leave any more lively, or more laſting impreſſions on us, than ſuch as may be kept up by thoſe ſtanding Records, and viſible Memorials, which now evidence to us the

neither true nor neceſſary. 'Tis falſe in many matters both of Fact and Reaſon, on which all men, that think at all, think in one way, and he has yet to ſhew why the Eſſentials of the Chriſtian Inſtitution may not be included among ſuch; I mean as they lie in the Bible, and ſo far as our aſſent is there explicitly required to them in one and the ſame preciſe determinate manner, on pain of forfeiting the Privileges of that Inſtitution. Theſe he will find to be very few and plain. But though he allows the whole of Chriſtianity to be true and reaſonable, yet he ſeems all along to beg the Queſtion, by ſuppoſing that it is of ſuch a nature as is incapable of being made to appear ſo to each perſon, ſo far as he is concerned to know either the ſubſtance of it, or its grounds. Hence all the formidable Objections againſt Reaſon's judging of the Goſpel-Truths; which yet hold equally in many other Truths of conſequence in common Life, wherein the common People nothwithſtanding go on very well by the uſe of their natural Faculties, be they never ſo weak or ſo ſtrongly beſet with Doubts and Difficulties. His other Arguments againſt admitting Reaſon in religious Matters, from ſome particular Inſtitutions and the general Practice of the World, are no better founded. That *Children* are introduced into the Chriſtian Church by *Baptiſm* [which our Author ſeems to argue for, and goes perhaps a little farther than he will be able to juſtify, when he aſſerts it to be *the Ordinance of God himſelf*] and that they have early prepoſſeſſions in favour of Chriſtianity [whereof he ſhews the great uſe and neceſſity, and wherein we moſt heartily

Truth of *Chriſtianity*. Not to mention that both of the foregoing Schemes would in ſome meaſure put it out of the power even of God himſelf to bring about a Reformation in Reli-

ly join with him] does this render their Religion the leſs reaſonable to them, when they are capable of reaſoning about it? Or are they ſtrictly under any other Obligation, when they come to age, of taking it upon themſelves, than what ariſes from their Conviction of the Reaſonableneſs and Wiſdom of ſo doing, from their being ſatisfied of its Truth and Divine Authority; and what they otherwiſe would have been under, when thus much ever ſhould come to their knowledge? Surely their being made to underſtand the *Chriſtian* Religion firſt, by no means hinders their giving it a fair examination afterwards, ſo ſoon and ſo far as they become qualified for ſuch Examination. Nay, if they underſtand it thoro'ly, they will find that it requires examination from all its Profeſſors in ſome degree or other, as appears ſufficiently from thoſe few Texts above. It does indeed inſiſt upon a right *Belief* and a conformable *Practice* in all Perſons to whom it has been fairly propoſed: nor is this either ſo uncommon a thing, or inconſiſtent with what we maintain; ſuppoſing ſtill its Truth and Credibility. Does any Lawgiver proclaim thoſe exceptions to the general obligation of his Laws, which accidentally ariſe from the ſole Incapacity of the Subject, and which common ſenſe is always ready to ſuggeſt, and willing to allow for, without the leaſt diminution of their Uſe and Obligatorineſs? Or would it be any derogation from their Excellence and Authority; or any excuſe for our not labouring to underſtand theſe Laws, that all men did not reaſon right about them?—Nor does our being to apply by *Prayer for the continuing ſtedfaſt in the Faith, ſhew*

the

gion, when it was once corrupted (as it might eaſily be in both of them) ſince thereby the ſtrongeſt and fitteſt of all means to procure Attention, Awe and Reverence, which we now

the Deſign of God that Reaſon ſhould not be at all employed on theſe occaſions; p. 11. any more than his *working in us both to will and do*, and our being taught to aſk this of him, proves that we have no occaſion to endeavour to *work out our own Salvation*. We do not pretend that Reaſon is itſelf ſufficient either to diſcover all that may be of benefit in Religion, or engage us to obſerve and act up to what it is really able to diſcover; and therefore there is room enough for our ſoliciting the Grace of God, as well to ſtrengthen and ſupport this very Faculty, as to bring others into due ſubjection to it; to lead us into the Truth; to make us love and ſeek it; to guard againſt every deviation from it; and enable us to reſiſt the numberleſs Temptations to Vice, Ignorance, and a criminal Unbelief. Nor laſtly, would the Difficulties and Diſcouragements which human Reaſon is too frequently laid under by the practice of the World, were that in truth ſo bad at preſent as this Author repreſents, wholly deſtroy its Influence in the point before us; or prove any thing more than that its Province is too much invaded by thoſe, be they *Parents*, *Tutors*, or *Magiſtrates*, who either wilfully or unwarily impoſe theſe Difficulties, and who alone are anſwerable for giving any handle for ſuch a Plea as he has grounded on them. If the two former conſtantly betray its Cauſe, by narrowing the Minds of Youth, and ſhutting up the Avenues of Knowledge; if they do not teach them carefully the Art of Reaſoning, and lead them to a fair uſe of Reaſon on every Subject within their ſphere and worthy their Enquiry; or if the laſt intrench upon its Rights by interpoſing their Authority in the grand affair of Divine Worſhip, be-

yond

call ſupernatural Interpoſition, would ſoon become familiar, cheap, and ineffectual to that end; as was hinted above. Beſides, what Unity or Uniformity of public Worſhip; what Decency and Order, could be preſerv'd in ſuch a State

yond barely keeping up the eſtabliſhed Form, and tolerating others; If this were indeed the Caſe now, as I hope it is not, this Author, I conceive, ſhould have ſhewn theſe Proceedings to be warrantable, e'er he went on in earneſt to draw ſuch a Conſequence, as that the *whole Subject is abſolutely out of Reaſon's Juriſdiction*. A Conſequence which can tend only to revive *Celſus*'s Calumny againſt the *Chriſtian* Cauſe, Μη ἐξεταζε, ἀλλα πιςευσον: and recommend the no leſs abſurd, modern Maxim, that *Ignorance is the Mother of Devotion*; which renders all that *Scripture*, which was given by Inſpiration, a dead, uſeleſs Letter; and repreſents that other *Candle of the Lord* as a falſe Light and dangerous, and ſuch as by this Writer's *Motto* is inſinuated to be a Curſe upon us, rather than a Bleſſing. This Notion indeed he has kept to all along, whether ſeriouſly or otherwiſe he knows beſt; and concludes ſuitably enough to it with this piece of Advice to his young Academick, that he content himſelf with being as rational a Chriſtian as his *Siſter* or *Mother*. p. 114.

As to the Inconſiſtencies which this ingenious Writer labours to fix both upon that excellent Inſtitution the *Boylean* Lecture and thoſe worthy perſons who have with ſo much ſucceſs accompliſh'd its Deſign, I need only appeal to Dr. *Ibbot*, who, I think, ſtands abſolutely clear of his Exceptions; and has as fully anſwer'd the End of its great and good Founder, as he has obviated this Author's whole Performance.

of

of things? If Men did ever *aſſemble themſelves together*, (the Reaſonableneſs and the Neceſſity whereof will be apparent ſo long as they are capable of having either their Memories refreſhed, or their Affections rais'd by ſenſible Objects; — ſo long as they have either Memory or Senſes; *i. e.* ſo long as they continue to be Men) in ſuch Aſſemblies *every one of them would have a Pſalm, a Doctrine, a Tongue, a Revelation, an Interpretation*; and what could this produce but Tumult, Strife, and an univerſal Confuſion? This ſurely is not ſo *reaſonable* a Service, nor ſo fit for *Edification*, as the preſent; not quite ſo proper a Method to convey and preſerve a Syſtem of Divine Truths in the World, as a regular, ſettled Inſtruction and Hiſtoric Faith, grounded on a ſtanding, written * Revelation, which holds theſe forth, together with their Proofs, to every one; and offers them to the view and examination of all Ages.

When ſome of theſe things are a little attended to, we may perhaps be convinc'd that either the ſame, or as great Objections would lie againſt

* The advantages of this, above *Oral Tradition*, may be ſeen in *Tillotſon*, V. 2. Fol. S. 73. p. 549. or *Le Clerc* Harm. 3 Diſs. p. 615.

any

any other aſſignable Method of communicating a Religion to Mankind.

If then neither all Men could be made equally wiſe and perfect; nor Religion be at once equally communicated to them all; if the preſent Laws of our Nature are the beſt that could be; and as ſuch ought to remain inviolate, and we be left to the common Methods of informing ourſelves, in all natural as well as ſupernatural Truths; it will follow in the laſt place, that Chriſtianity could not have been propagated otherwiſe than in fact it is, namely in a gradual, progreſſive, partial manner.

Let it be proclaim'd at firſt never ſo far and wide, yet the reception and continuance of it muſt in a great meaſure, we ſee, depend on Mens own Diſpoſitions, both natural and moral. Some previous, as well as concomitant, Qualifications are requiſite to the due exerciſe, and influence of it, as well in private Men, as public States and Communities: ſo that among a People ſunk in Ignorance or Barbarity; where there is no kind of good Order or Government eſtabliſhed; no regular Forms of Education inſtituted, and obſerv'd; where there is an univerſal want of Diſcipline, and a Diſſoluteneſs of Manners; there *Chriſtianity* cannot ſubſiſt. Miracles were indeed neceſſary to gain Attention,

and give Authority to it at firſt; but the perpetuity of them in any kind would (as we have ſeen) weaken that very Attention, and deſtroy their own Authority. When therefore a Religion has once been ſufficiently promulg'd by Divine Authority, it muſt be committed to human means; and left to the conduct of that Nation or Society in which it is planted, and by their care be handed down to Poſterity: it muſt be preſerv'd and propagated in a natural way, and by the ordinary Courſe of Providence; or elſe there is no avoiding the ill conſequences abovemention'd; namely, perpetual Enthuſiaſm or Impoſture. As a Syſtem of Divine Doctrines and Rules of Life, it muſt be ſubject to the common Methods of Inſtruction; and taught as all other Science is. Youth of all kinds are to be principled, and grounded in it; and ſome inſtructed in thoſe other parts of Learning, which may fit them for a due enquiry into its original Evidence; for underſtanding the true Nature, Ends, and Uſes of it; and conveying the ſame knowledge down to future Ages. Some Orders of Men likewiſe muſt be ſet apart, and authoriſed to explain and inculcate it; to defend its Doctrines, as well as to inſpect and to ſecure the practice of its Precepts.

From

From all which it appears, that ignorant, unciviliz'd, ſlaviſh and brutiſh Nations, are as uncapable * of duly receiving ſuch an Inſtitution, as they are of all thoſe other Sciences, Arts, Improvements, which poliſh and adorn the reſt of Mankind, and make Life a Bleſſing.

Without ſome tolerable degree of Learning and Civility, men don't ſeem qualified to reap the Benefits of the *Chriſtian* Inſtitution; and together with theſe, they generally do receive it; the ſame human means ſerving to improve their Notions in Religion, which help to enlarge their Knowledge in all other Subjects; and at the ſame time directing them to, and in a natural way, enabling them to arrive at, the moſt perfect Diſpenſation of it. One of the chief Rea-

* By being uncapable of *receiving* it, I mean uncapable of receiving *with effect*, of retaining or applying it to any valuable purpoſe; for which Men do not ſeem properly qualify'd, notwithſtanding any natural capacity, without aid of the Arts and liberal Accompliſhments in ſome degree. Moſt of the *Indians* are, I doubt not, capable of underſtanding the Principles of our Faith at the firſt propoſal, but ſcarcely qualify'd, I think, to make a right uſe, and receive the ſalutary effects thereof, without ſome farther pains being taken to implant worthy Principles of Civil Government and ſocial Life amongſt them; without which, all endeavours to introduce the pureſt and moſt perfect Syſtem of Religion ſeem prepoſterous.

ſons commonly aſſigned for the *Fitneſs of the Time* of *Chriſt*'s appearing in the World, was the extent of Learning, and Commerce through all the then known parts of it; * which tended very much to open Mens Minds, and qualify them to receive his Inſtitution; as well as paved the way for a more general Communication of it: but as there were many at that time *not able to hear it*, ſo on the ſame account, neither yet are they able, nor will they be, till *by reaſon of uſe* (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) *they have their Senſes exerciſed, to diſcern both Good and Evil:* Till their rational Faculties be enlarged and improved; their natural Genius cultivated and refined; which ſeems in a good meaſure to conſtitute their reſpective *Fitneſs of Time.* a

* This is more fully explained in the following Diſcourſes, Part 2.

a That the *Chineſe* in particular, from whom ſome have thought that the ſtrongeſt Argument might be drawn againſt what is here ſuggeſted, and whoſe Learning and Education have been ſo much cried up, are very far from deſerving ſo great a Character, ſee *Renaudot*'s Diſſertation on their Learning. *Ancient Accounts of India and China*, p. 200. *Terry*'s *Voyage to the Eaſt Indies*, ſect. 12. and 21. *Travels of ſeveral Miſſioners*, p. 180, &c. or *Millar*'s *Hiſtory of the Propagation of Chriſtianity*, V. 2. p. 266, &c. or *Le Comte*'s *Memoirs*, paſſim. I ſhall give one Inſtance from the laſt mentioned Author in a branch of Philoſophy for which they have been oft particularly celebrated. 'All

'Nations

And as barbarous and ſavage Nations are unable to hear the Truth; ſo vicious, debauched, immoral ones, are in like manner incapable of bringing forth the Fruits thereof. If ſuch a People did receive the true Religion, they would ſoon drop it again, as many Nations moſt undoubtedly have done; at leaſt they would loſe the Spirit, Life, and Power of it; and then the bare Name, and outward Form will not be worth enquiring after: nay much better would it be, if theſe were always quitted too, together with the other. *Chriſtianity* cannot immediate-

'Nations have ever been aſtoniſhed at *Eclipſes*, becauſe 'they could not diſcover the Cauſe of them: there is no-'thing ſo extravagant as the ſeveral Reaſons ſome have 'given for it; but one would wonder that the *Chineſe*, 'who as to Aſtronomy may juſtly claim Seniority over 'all the World beſides, have reaſoned as abſurdly on that 'point as the reſt. They have fancied that in Heaven 'there is a prodigious great Dragon, who is a profeſſed 'Enemy to the Sun and Moon, and ready at all times to 'eat them up. For this reaſon, as ſoon as they perceive 'an Eclipſe, they all make a terrible rattling with Drums 'and Braſs Kettles, till the Monſter frightned at the Noiſe, 'lets go his Prey. Perſons of Quality, who have read our 'Books, have for theſe ſeveral Years been undeceived: 'but the old Cuſtoms (eſpecially if the Sun loſeth his 'Light) are ſtill obſerved at *Pekin*, which, as is uſual, 'are both very ſuperſtitious and very ridiculous. While 'the Aſtronomers are on the Towers to make their Ob-'ſervations, the chief Mandarines belonging to the *Lipou*

ly transform Mens Minds, and totally change the general Temper and Complexion of any People; but on the contrary, it will thereby itſelf undergo conſiderable alteration, and its own Influence and Effect in a great meaſure depend thereon: *With the Pure it will be pure*, and they that are otherwiſe will ſoon defile it; will either corrupt it with Fable and abſurd Traditions; or turn it into Licentiouſneſs, and carnal Policy.

Thus did the Eaſtern Nations, and were overwhelmed with *Mahometaniſm*; * and thus did a great part of *Africa*. To the like Cauſes,

'fall on their Knees, in a Hall or Court of the Palace, 'looking attentively that way, and frequently bowing to-'wards the Sun, to expreſs the pity they take of him; or 'rather to the Dragon, to beg him not to moleſt the 'World, by depriving it of ſo neceſſary a Planet.' *Le Comte*, pag. 76. Ed. 1738. comp. p. 93, &c. and Lett. 8. From their notorious Ignorance of, and, by conſequence, Contempt for the reſt of the World, and great Averſeneſs to any Communication with it, till of very late years, we may eaſily account for this ſlow progreſs of theirs, both in the Knowledge of Nature and Reveal'd Religion, notwithſtanding their having had very conſiderable Means of improving both in their hands for ſome time; nor are they wanting in point of Genius; as may be ſeen in the ſame excellent Author.—But this will come in more properly under the 3d Part.

* V. Part II.

in

in all probability, as well as the Neglect and Miſbehaviour of its Propagators, and Profeſſors, (which have been here but too remarkable [b]) is it owing that true Religion makes no greater Progreſs in the Eaſt and Weſt *Indies*. Though, it muſt be owned, great and good Things have been done in it of late, by *Societies* eſtabliſhed for that purpoſe; and none perhaps have been more diligent and diſcreet than our own.

But it were beyond the Limits of this Diſcourſe, to enquire into the State of every Hea-

[b] Of the former, a large Account may be ſeen in *Millar*'s Hiſt. c. 8. p. 274, 284, 291, *&c.* and c. 9. p. 376, *&c.* Add Mr. *Warburton*'s judicious Obſervation at the End of Sect. 6. p. 306, *&c.* of *Div. Leg.* 2d Edit. As to the latter, we cannot but obſerve the great and general Prejudice, which muſt prevail in both the *Indies* againſt all *Europeans*, from the injurious Treatment they have often received from us, as may be ſeen in almoſt every late Account of Voyages, *&c.* Numberleſs Inſtances of this occur in *Salmon*'s Modern Hiſtory, particularly in the preſent State of the *Sunda Iſlands*, c. 4. Having deſcribed the extraordinary Suſpicion of the *Japoneſe*, whoſe Goodneſs and Humanity, towards us were once as eminent, as is their Dread at preſent of all *Chriſtian* Nations, he concludes, 'But from whence can all this immoderate caution proceed, unleſs from the ill Uſage they have met with from *Europeans?* Surely it ſufficiently demonſtrates what I have ſo often obſerved, that we did not find, but make theſe Nations barbarous; and if they have any thing ſhocking in their Behaviour at this day, they learnt

then Country, in order to ſee what probable reaſons might be aſſign'd, for either their firſt rejecting, or not ſtill retaining *Chriſtianity*. Perhaps it may be enough to have given theſe general Hints; which though they were all founded on mere conjecture, yet till ſuch an Hypotheſis can be diſproved from Fact, we ought rather to acquieſce in them, than confidently arraign Providence, and cenſure its Ways with Man, in Matters of the laſt Importance. But I hope Arguments may be drawn from

'it from us, who inſtead of planting Chriſtianity and im-
'proving their Morals, have in fact corrupted them.' *Modern Hiſt.* V. 1. 4to p. 226. Such Obſervations are I fear but too well grounded, and might be carried a great way towards accounting for the ſlow Progreſs of Chriſtianity among ſuch Nations, as ſeem otherwiſe not ill qualified for the reception of it. Nor are the frequent Quarrels among Chriſtians themſelves, and their notorious ill uſage of each other, a leſs prejudice againſt their Profeſſion, as is obſerv'd by the ſame Writer, p. 264. 'So extremely jealous were 'the *Portugueſe* of the *Indian* Trade, that even their 'Prieſts did not ſtick at the moſt treacherous and barbarous methods to exclude all other Nations from it, 'which muſt, no doubt, give the *Indians* a very great 'Opinion of the *Chriſtian* Religion they pretended to 'propagate; nor need we look for any other reaſon why '*Chriſtianity* does not gain Ground in the Eaſt, though 'the *Indian* Princes have given the greateſt Encouragement to the Miſſionaries themſelves upon account of 'their Skill in the Mathematics.'

them

them, ſufficient to ſtop the mouths of our Adverſaries, and ſilence each Gainſayer; a more particular diſcuſſion of which, will be the ſubject of ſome following Diſcourſes. I ſhall only beg leave at preſent to add an Obſervation or two, concerning a Diverſity of Religion in general, and the caſe of thoſe who cannot attain to the Knowledge of the *Chriſtian.*

And firſt, Though I ſee no reaſon to affirm with ſome, that God takes equal delight in the various kinds of Worſhip, which come to be eſtabliſhed in the World; and that a ſpecific Difference in Religion is, in itſelf, and abſtractly conſider'd, as acceptable to him, as that diverſity of Beings which he has made: on the contrary, I think he has plainly diſcovered one moſt perfect Standard, and requires all to approach as near it as they can; and may be ſaid to approve every approach to it, and prefer that to its oppoſite; in the ſame manner as he does every other excellence, and improvement of the Human Mind, where he intends perpetual advancement, as we have ſeen: yet from what has been already ſaid, thus much will appear, *viz.* That one of theſe is in ſome meaſure a neceſſary conſequence of the other, during the preſent Laws of Nature, in the moral and intellectual World: a difference of Rank, and Capa-

Capacity, among Men, muſt needs produce an equal difference in their Religious Notions, as was ſhewn above; ſuch difference therefore, in degree of Perfection, is made neceſſary by the Conſtitution of things, and the general Diſpenſations of Providence; and what by the ordinary courſe of Divine Providence is to Men in ſome circumſtances render'd unavoidable, that the Divine Goodneſs will, in theſe Circumſtances, moſt undoubtedly excuſe, and accept with all its Imperfections. *

The ſame thing obtains remarkably in each particular Syſtem, even in thoſe of *Chriſtianity* itſelf, which to different Perſons, and in different Times and Places, appears in a very different Light: though ſo much always, every where, lies level to all, as is abſolutely requir'd of each, and ſo much alſo as will, or might, have a very conſiderable influence upon their Lives and Manners. And the ſame may in a great meaſure be affirm'd of *Modern Heathens*; the generality of whom ſtill preſerve in ſome degree, the great fundamental Principles of one Supreme *God*, a

* See Dr. *Rymer*'s General Repreſentation of Reveal'd Religion. c. 6. 'Tis a Beauty in Providence to advance 'in the Diſpenſations of Religion; to propoſe various 'Perfections in Piety and Virtue upon Earth, and anſwer 'them with reſpective Promotions in Heaven.' p. 152.

Pro-

Providence, and *Future State*; as Authors of the beſt Credit have aſſured us. *

2. As to the caſe of thoſe People in general, we may conſider, that if they have fewer and leſs Advantages than others, their Natures and Capacities muſt likewiſe be inferior; to which their future State may be proportioned: God is not oblig'd to make all men equally perfect in the next world, any more than in this; and if their Capacity be render'd leſs than that of an ordinary *Chriſtian*, a lower degree of Happineſs may fill it. However, we need not be very ſolicitous about their Eſtate, much leſs caſt any ungrateful imputation on the Governour of the World, for not having dealt ſo bountifully with them as with ourſelves; ſince we know that, in all caſes, every one will at length be *accepted according to that he has, and not according to that he has not*; and that *to whomſoever much is given, of him ſhall much be required.* We know that all their Souls are in the Hand of a moſt merciful Creator, all *whoſe ways are equal*; and who will moſt aſſuredly deal with every one, according to what is juſt and right. But of this more hereafter.

* A Collection of them may be ſeen in *Stackhouſe*'s Body of Divinity Part 3. c. 8. S. 2. 3. p. 528. *&c.* or *Millar*'s Hiſt. of the Prop. of *Chriſtianity*, c. 5. *&c.*

I come

I come in the laſt place, briefly to obſerve, the great Benefit of complying with the Terms of the Goſpel, and the inexcuſableneſs of rejecting it.

The Benefit of the Chriſtian Inſtitution above all others appears, in that it naturally fits Men for an higher degree of Happineſs, as well as entitles them to it, by poſitive Covenant. It gives them more juſt and worthy Notions of the Divine Being, and the Relation they bear to him; and of the Duties which reſult from that Relation. It explains, improves, exalts all thoſe Virtues and good Diſpoſitions, which are the natural *Foundation* of Happineſs, both in this world and the next. It directs us to add to our Faith *Virtue*, and to Virtue *Knowledge*, and to Knowledge *Temperance*, and to Temperance *Patience*, and to Patience *Godlineſs*, and to Godlineſs *Brotherly Kindneſs*, and to Brotherly Kindneſs *Charity*. It propoſes to our Study, *whatſoever things are true, honeſt, juſt, pure, lovely, and of good report*; and binds all theſe upon us with the ſtrongeſt *Sanctions*; at once giving us the moſt ample Inſtruction in, and incitement to, the practice of our Duty; and moreover affording all neceſſary Means of *Grace*, in order to prepare and train us up for Glory. And thus, as St. *Peter* ſays, *hath the Father*

given

given unto us all things that pertain unto Life and Godlineſs, through the knowledge of him that hath called us unto Glory and Virtue;— that at length we might be partakers of the DIVINE NATURE.

The great Condition of this Covenant is expreſs'd in the Text, and many other parts of Scripture, by *Repentance: Repentance from dead works, and ſerving the living God.* This was the ſubſtance of our Saviour's preaching, and what the Apoſtles *continually teſtified, both to the Jews and alſo to the Greeks*, namely *Repentance towards God*;* that is, a thorough Reformation of Mind and Temper; a Renouncing of this World, its Vanities and Vices; and an improvement in all thoſe Graces and good Habits, which are abſolutely neceſſary to fit us for the Preſence of God; the Society of Angels, and Spirits of juſt Men made perfect.

How gracious a Deſign this! how reaſonable, juſt and holy an Inſtitution! How ſtrongly muſt it recommend itſelf to every man's Judgement and Conſcience, when once rightly underſtood! And what infinite reaſon have we to give continual thanks unto the Father, who hath not only prepared for us an *Inheritance*; but likewiſe laboured, to make us *meet* to be

* Acts 20. 21.

Par-

Partakers of it, *among the Saints in Light!* And *how ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great Salvation?* How diſingenuous, and ungrateful muſt it be, to refuſe and put it from us! How dangerous, to contemn and blaſpheme it!

To conclude, May the Mercies of God, in *Chriſt Jeſus*, engage every one of us in time to obey the Divine Precept in the Text; to ſhake off more eſpecially all ſuch Vices, as the Heathens of old delighted in, and which betray too many now a days into the like State; and blind their Eyes, and harden their Hearts, againſt all poſſible Conviction; namely, Pride, Covetouſneſs and Senſuality. May we all comply with the Apoſtle's advice, in *walking circumſpectly towards them that are without*; ſince the reaſon aſſign'd is, in ſome reſpects, of as great force at preſent; — *becauſe the Days are evil.* As Infidelity ſtill abounds, and the Love of many waxeth cold, we who profeſs the Faith of *Chriſt*, and think we have more perfect underſtanding of it, and are to communicate the ſame to others; *we* ought to contend ſo much the more earneſtly for it, and labour to adorn the Doctrine of our Lord in all things. To our daily Prayers, therefore, let us add our conſtant Endeavours, that the *Kingdom of God may come* on thoſe who have not yet received it; and be

reſtored

reſtored in purity, and perfection, to ſuch as have rejected it: and finally, let us beware leſt in any of us be found *an evil Heart of Unbelief*; let us take care that we be not of thoſe, who, either in Principle, or Practice, *draw back unto Perdition*; *but of them that believe to the ſaving of the Soul.*

The

II.

The Scheme of Providence,

With regard to

The *Time* and *Manner* of the ſeveral Diſpenſations of Revealed Religion.

Creſcat igitur oportet, et multum vehementerque proficiat, tam ſingulorum quam omnium, tam unius hominis quam totius Eccleſiæ, ætatum ac ſeculorum gradibus, intelligentia, ſcientia, ſapientia. Vinc. Lirin. Common. 1. 28.

GAL. iv. 4.

But when the Fulneſs of the Time was come, God ſent forth his Son.

THE Coming of *Chriſt* in the Fleſh is a Diſpenſation ſo full of Wiſdom and Goodneſs, that in whatever view we conſider it, it will appear moſt worthy its Divine Author. The preciſe *Time* in which he was manifeſted, though it has been made the ſubject of more Cavils, ancient and modern, than any other Circumſtance attending it, yet I doubt not but, upon a fair examination, may be diſcovered to bear the ſame Characters.

On this head the following Queſtions are uſually aſked. If the common Father of Mankind be infinite in Goodneſs, and the *Chriſtian* Scheme be the only acceptable way of worſhipping him, and abſolutely neceſſary to our Salvation; Why was it not communicated to the World much ſooner? Why was this greateſt of all Bleſſings kept back to the laſt;—to the *End of the World*, as it is called? * Nay, 'if God 'always acts for the good of his Creatures, 'what reaſon can be aſſigned why he ſhould

* Heb. 9. 26.

'not *from the beginning* have diſcovered ſuch 'things as make for their good; but defer the 'doing of it till the time of *Tiberius*?' * — All the late Adverſaries to *Chriſtianity* lay the greateſt weight on this Objection; † and accordingly ſeveral Arguments have been offered to remove it; I ſhall ſelect ſome of them, which ſeem the moſt concluſive, in my following Diſcourſe, and add ſuch farther Obſervations as may help to ſet the whole in a proper Light.

When the *Fulneſs of the Time* ‡ was come.— The Apoſtle in this Chapter is comparing the Ages of the world, to the Life of a Man, and its ſeveral Stages; as Infancy, Childhood, Youth, Maturity. If we reflect on this compariſon we ſhall find it very juſt in general, and that the World itſelf, or the collective Body of Mankind, as well as each particular Member; has

* Chriſtianity as old, &c. p. 196. 4to.

† C. *Blount*, [or the Author of a Letter to him ſigned A.W. lately republiſhed under the name of *Dryden* in the ſummary Account] was ſo very confident of its being unanſwerable, that he was willing to reſt the whole Cauſe of Infidelity upon it. Miſcellaneous works p. 210, &c. The Author of *Chriſt. as old*, dwelt very largely on it in many parts of his Book; and not to mention *Chubb* and others, the Author of *Deiſm fairly ſtated* ſtill repeats the ſame thing over and over again, from p. 87 to 95, as if no anſwer had been ever made to it.

‡ Or the proper Seaſon, v. *Tit.* 1 3.

from

from very low beginnings proceeded by a regular gradation in all kinds of Knowledge; has been making ſlow advances towards Perfection, in its ſeveral Periods; and received continual improvements from its infancy to this very Day. [a] And though in both caſes this progreſs be ſometimes interrupted, and the courſe of this World and its Inhabitants appear, like that of the Heavenly Bodies, to ſuffer ſome Retrogradations; yet we have reaſon to believe that theſe are ſuch, for the moſt part, in appearance only; that this very Lett in like manner, where it is real, makes way for a more rapid progreſs afterwards; which ſeems to bring matters into the ſame State, upon the whole, as if they had been all the while progreſſive. Farther, every one that looks into the Hiſtory of the World muſt obſerve, that the Minds of Men have all along been gradually opened by a Train of Events, ſtill improving upon, and adding light to each other; as that of each individual is, by proceeding from the firſt Elements and Seeds of Science, to more enlarged views; and a ſtill higher growth. Mankind are not, nor ever have been, capable of entering

[a] For an explanation of this, ſee Dr. *Edwards*'s Survey of all the Diſpenſations of Religion, *&c.* V. 1. p. 396. and V. 2. p. 615. — 21, *&c.* or Mr. *Worthington*'s Eſſay on *Man's Redemption* c. 8. *&c.*

into the Depths of Knowledge at once; of receiving a whole Syſtem of Natural or Moral Truths together; but muſt be let into them by degrees; and have them communicated by little and little, as they are able to bear it. In this manner does every Art and Science make its way into the world: And though now and then an extraordinary Genius may ariſe, and reach as it were ſome Ages beyond that in which he lives; yet how few of his Contemporaries are able to follow him, or even underſtand what he delivers! The generality ſtill go on ſtep by ſtep in gathering up, and digeſting, ſome ſmall portions of that vaſt ſtock of Knowledge, which he pour'd out at once; and are for a long time, in reſpect to him, but mere Children. So that notwithſtanding a few ſuch extraordinary inſtances, I think, we may affirm in general, that from the very beginning of the world, Science, or all kinds of intellectual Accompliſhments, have been found to make very ſlow, and pretty regular, advances among the bulk of Mankind; but that upon the whole, advancing they have been, and are. This, I ſay, is generally ſo in fact; [a] and therefore will have place in religious, as well as all other Truths,

[a] A more particular Proof of this will be given in the 3d Part.

among

among men either taken collectively, or in each individual. Why the caſe is thus in both; why all are not adult at once, both in Body and Mind, concerns not Revelation to account for, ſo much as the Religion of Nature; at leaſt they are here, as in the former caſe, both on the ſame foot; and the ſame Principles may be applied to each of them. And though in this reſpect, the Divine Diſpenſations ſeem to differ from Human Arts and Sciences, that theſe are commonly the moſt rude and imperfect at firſt, and every part of them improving by repeated Tryals; whereas the others have all that purity and perfection at their Delivery, which they are deſigned to have; and rather loſe, in many reſpects, than get by length of time; yet will not this make any material difference on the whole.

To ſtate this matter right, we ought to diſtinguiſh both between the Delivery of a Doctrine, and its general Reception in the world; which we know is always according to the Meaſure of the Recipients only; which muſt chiefly depend upon the State, and Qualifications of the Age they live in: and alſo, between the ſupernatural Aſſiſtance, and extraordinary Impreſſions, at its firſt publication; and the ordinary State in which it appears, and the uſual progreſs it makes, as ſoon as ever theſe come to

ceaſe; and it is left to be continued by mere human means; (as we have ſhewn before that it muſt be) when we ſhall find it partaking of the taſte, and temper of the Times through which it paſſes; and propagated in the ſame gradual, partial manner, as all other parts of Science; all Human Acquiſitions and Improvements are.

Let us proceed then to conſider the ſeveral Diſpenſations of Religion in this light, and ſee whether each will not appear to have been delivered in its proper Time, and as ſoon as it became fully neceſſary; as alſo, whether each was not as perfect as it could be ſuppoſed to have been, conſidering the ſeaſon in which it was delivered; and every ſubſequent one, an improvement on all thoſe that went before.

We will enquire Firſt, what proviſion God made for the Inſtruction of Mankind in the *Infancy* of the World; and whether it was expedient to ſend his Son upon their firſt Tranſgreſſion.

Now we have reaſon to ſuppoſe that *Adam*, during his ſtate of Innocence, held conſtant communication with the Deity; [a] from whence he receiv'd his information of things, and was

[a] *Gen.* 2. 23, 24, compared with *Matth.* 19. 5. *Mark* 10. 7. and 1 *Cor.* 6. 16. See Bp. *Bull* on the Subject. *Diſc.* p. 182.

directed in the uſe of them. [b] And if he had been content to follow that Direction, he would undoubtedly have been ſecured from any pernicious Errors; and ſupplied with all the Inſtruction, and Aſſiſtance, which was neceſſary for him; and trained up by degrees to as thorough an acquaintance with the Nature of God, and the things around him, as was agreeable to his own Nature; and conſiſtent with his State and Circumſtances in the World. But upon his rejecting this Guide, and applying elſewhere for Knowledge, and ſetting up to be his own Director; that Communication might, both with juſtice and wiſdom, be in a great meaſure withdrawn from him, and he left to the imperfect notice of his Senſes; to learn the Nature of both Good and Evil, and the way to obtain the one, and avoid the other, by a painful experience. [a] Yet was he not left wholly to himſelf in the affair of Religion; but directed to ſuch a form of Worſhip, as ſerv'd to point out, and perpetually remind him, both of the demerit of his

p. 182, *&c.* Only let it be obſerv'd, that what this learned Author, with ſome others, attributes to Divine *Inſpiration*, in this caſe, ſeems to be more naturally accounted for from an expreſs, *Oral Revelation* made to *Adam*.

[b] *Gen.* 1. 28.—30. 2. 29. See the Authors referred to by *Patrick* on *Gen.* 2. 17.

[a] See A. Bp. *King*'s Sermon on the *Fall*.

Crime,

Crime, and the dreadfulneſs of that Penalty which he had incurred; and alſo gave him ſome hopes of future Pardon, and a final Acceptance with his Creator. All this ſeems to have been ſignified by the Inſtitution of Animal *Sacrifices*, ſetting before him all the Horrors of that Death, which he had been ſentenced to undergo; but which was hitherto ſuſpended; and that of ſome other Creatures demanded in its room, by way of ranſom and expiation made to the Lord of Life. This, together with the Promiſe of a future Deliverance, in *the Seed of the Woman*, ſerv'd for the preſent to afford ſome comfort to our firſt Parents under their heavy ſentence; and to convince them, that their offended Maker was not wholly implacable; as well as to lead their Poſterity to ſuch Notions of Religion, and kind of Worſhip, as ſhould conſtantly reconcile them to the Deity, and remove the Guilt of their particular Offences; and alſo prepare them for the great *Attonement*, to be offer'd in due time; which was to take off the whole of *Adam*'s Curſe, [c] and reſtore both him and his Poſterity

[c] What that was may be ſeen in *Hallet*'s Diſcourſes, V. 2. p. 276, *&c.* or at the beginning of *Locke*'s *Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity.*

to

to that immortal Life which he had forfeited: [d] Nay, raiſe them to a much higher degree of Happineſs, than he could be conceiv'd to enjoy

[d] After all that has been wrote upon the ſubject of *Sacrifices*, I am ſtill forced to aſcribe their *Origin* to Divine Appointment; and as to the *Intention* of them, though we may conceive ſome to have been at firſt enjoin'd as proper *acknowledgements* of God's Dominion over the Creatures, and of Man's holding that ſhare of it which was delegated to him from his hand, and enjoying all earthly Bleſſings through his Bounty; ſome by way of poſitive *Mulct*, *Fine*, or *Forfeiture*. [*Abarb.* ex com. in *Lev.* p. 313. *Cleric.* in *Lev.* 1. 2. *Morality of Religion*, p. 35.] to render every breach of Duty burdenſome, and in ſome meaſure expenſive to the Sinner; ſome for a *Teſtimony* or *Symbolical Repreſentation* of his Repentance, his *Confeſſion* of ſuch breach and *Deprecation* of its Puniſhment. [*Eſſay on the Nature and Deſign*, &c. p. 32, &c.] Some as a *Federal Rite* between God and him, or a *Form* of entering into *Friendſhip* with his Maker: [ib paſſim] and obtaining future *Favours* from him: yet there were others that ſeem to have had a higher view, [or ſuch view might be joined with ſome of thoſe others abovementioned] denoting ſomewhat properly *vicarious*, and in a more eſpecial manner deſcribing the Terms of that great Covenant, original Grant, or Promiſe, whereby Man was to be delivered from the effects of the *firſt breach*; which, as ſuch, was in each Diſpenſation thought proper to be particularly diſtinguiſhed. All which Appointments, Grants or Covenants, may likewiſe be underſtood (not in their literal, ſtrict Senſe, or as in themſelves abſolutely neceſſary, but) as ſo many Schemes of Government, or convenient Methods of Divine Oeconomy; treating Mankind, (not like Philoſophers, but) as

the

in his Paradiſaical State. [c] And that this Rite, with all its Circumſtances, was enjoin'd by God himſelf, and explain'd to our firſt Parent, is more than probable, even from the ſhort account we have of thoſe Times; ſince we find his two Sons bringing their Offerings to a certain place, * and well appriſed (by ſome viſible tokens no doubt ‡) when they were accepted; as that of *Sacrifice* was rather than the other: and moſt likely accepted for that very reaſon, becauſe it had been appointed by God himſelf, and was perform'd agreeably to his Command. [a]

the generality of them always were to be treated; and leading them gradually to as juſt and worthy Notions of God and themſelves, as they became capable of receiving. — But to aſcribe ſuch an Inſtitution, as this of ſacrificing Animals, wholly to the invention of Men, eſpecially the Men of thoſe times, ſeems very unnatural: of which more in the following Notes. — That this had actually ſuch an effect upon the *Jews*, as we laſt mentioned; that they were led to expect an *expiatory* Sacrifice from the *Meſſiah*, and commonly thought and ſpoke of him in that capacity, ſeems probable from *John's* account of *Chriſt* at his very firſt appearance. *Joh.* 1. 29. v. *Cleric.* and again v. 36. from *Iſaiah* 53. 7. Comp. *Acts* 8. 32. and *Rev.* 5. 12.

[c] See A. B. *King*'s Note 81. p. 466, *&c.* 3d Edit.

* *Gen.* 4. 3, 4.

‡ *Heb.* 11. 4.

[a] See Bp. *Sherlock*'s *Uſe and Intent of Propheſy*, p. 73, *&c.* or Dr. *Rymer*'s *Repreſent.* p. 30, *&c.* This one Article of the Diſtinction made between *Abel*'s Offering, and that of *Cain*,

The *Time* of their Worſhip, ſeems likewiſe to have had the ſame origin; as well from God's bleſſing, and ſanctifying the Seventh day;† and the ancient method of reckoning by Weeks ‖;

Cain, which according to the Hiſtory, was ſo notorious as to deject and irritate the latter, and which cannot, I think, be accounted for otherwiſe than by the Interpoſition of God; nor that remarkable Interpoſition ſolved on other Principles, than *Cain*'s preſuming to omit the preſcribed *Victim*, through his want of *Faith*, *Heb.* 11. 4. (otherwiſe his Portion of the Fruits of the Ground, might well appear to be as juſt and natural a Tribute of Devotion from one in his province, as ſome part of the Flock was from his Brother; as we have not the leaſt intimation of any other difference in the ſincerity of their Diſpoſitions, whereon to ground the above Diſtinction between them) this, I ſay, ſeems a ſufficient proof, that Sacrifice was of Divine Inſtitution, and is but ill reſolved by *Spencer* L. 3. c. 4. S. 2. The ſame thing is inferred, with a good deal of probability, from the mention of thoſe *Coats of Skins which the Lord made for Adam and his Wife*, Gen. 3, 21. which ſeem moſt likely to have been of thoſe Beaſts that were offered in ſacrifice, and might perhaps be in ſome meaſure of the ſame intendment with that Sacrifice; for the diſcovery of which, rather difficult and diſagreeable way of Worſhip, one would think they ſhould ſtand in need of God's particular direction, as much, at leaſt, as for that other, more eaſy and obvious one, of cloathing themſelves. Concerning the uſe and propriety of this kind of cloathing at that time, ſee *Leland*'s Anſwer to *Chriſtianity as old, &c. p.* 503, *&c.*

† *Gen.* 2. 3. *Exod.* 16. 25, 26.

‖ *Gen.* 8. 10, 12. 39. 27. *Eccl*[as]. 22. 12.

[a me-

[a method much more ancient than the obſervation of the ſeven *Planets*, to which *Le Clerc* aſcribes it. *Not.* ad *Grot. de Ver.* 1. 16. p. 42.] As from the earlieſt obſervance of that Sabbath, in all Nations of the World; [b] without any ground in nature for ſuch practice, or the leaſt hint, or probability of its ariſing from Human Invention [c].

[b] *Joſeph.* contra. Ap. L. 2. *Exod.* 16. *Philo de Op. Mund. Salden de Jur. N.* L 3. c. 10. 11. *&c. Euſeb.* Evang. Præp. 13. 12. *Grot. de Ver.* L. 1. c. 16. and *Allix*'s *Reflections*, B. 1. c. 7.

[c] See *Rymer*'s *Repreſent. of Rev. Rel.* c. 2. And the ſame may be ſaid of *Tithes*. *Jenkin.* V. 1. p. 102. Authors on each of theſe points may be ſeen in Dr. *Waterland*'s firſt Charge, p. 41. *&c.* On Sacrifices in particular, *Carpzov.* Introd. p. 118 and *Budde Hiſt. Eccl.* P. 1. S. 1. 30. **. p. 115. The Diſtinction that we meet with afterwards [*Gen.* 7. 28, &c.] between clean and unclean Beaſts, which manifeſtly relates to Sacrifice, ſhews likewiſe the continuance of that kind of Worſhip; and ſeems to prove that it was not owing to any human eſtabliſhment, any more than this direction itſelf could be. And that the Men of theſe, as well as after Ages, had both ſufficient authority, and inſtruction to uſe the Fleſh of the former ſort of Beaſts for Food, as well as clothe themſelves with their Skins, appears to me as plain, as that the tending and taking care of ſuch was their chief buſineſs, and occupation. Nor can I comprehend what merit there could be at any time in their making *Offerings unto the Lord their God of that which coſt them nothing*, of that which they could not eat; or how they

And that in thoſe days they had frequent intercourſe with the Deity, and were made ſenſible of his eſpecial preſence in ſome places, appears farther, from his Diſcourſe with *Cain*, both before and after the Murther of his Brother; * as alſo from *Cain*'s Complaint of being hid from his *Face*; † and his going out from the *preſence of the Lord.* ‡ Nor is it at all likely

they came to diſtinguiſh [which they did very early] between *Fat* and *Lean*; between the *good choice pieces*, and others; unleſs they had taſted them themſelves: though 'tis upon the chimerical ſuppoſition, that the uſe of Animal Food was not included in the original Grant of abſolute Dominion, given to Mankind over all the Creatures, [ſome of which could be of no other ſervice to them] that the great *Grotius*, and others, founded their attempt to explain away all Animal Sacrifice, before the Deluge. Eædem 'pecudes, quæ ad eſum, etiam ad ſacrificia a *Noacho* ad-'hibitæ; ſcil. mundæ quotquot erant *Gen.* 8. 20. Hic ſa-'crificiorum uſus cûm Diluvio ſit antiquior, idem de pe-'cudum eſu nobis perſuaſum, contra quam multi ſentiunt. 'Neque enim *Abel* in ſacrificium id obtuliſſet Deo, quo 'veſci nefas credidiſſet, et fruſtra paviſſet agnos quibus 'non licuiſſet uti. Quin ipſa diſtinctio animalium in mun-'da et immunda docet alia permiſſa fuiſſe, alia prohibita. 'Neque enim in animalibus natura ſuâ quicquam immun-'dum. Sed immundum id eſt ex lege, cujus eſus interdi-'citur. Itaque illud, *Gen.* 1. 29. *Vobis erit in cibum*, non 'ſolum ad plantas referimus, ſed etiam ad Animalia, de 'quibus præcedenti verſu actum fuerat.' *Bochart. Hieroz.* p. 11. edit. 4. Comp. Bp. *Clayton*'s Anſw. to Dr. *Delaney*,

* *Gen.* 4. 6, 9. † *v.* 14. ‡ *v.* 16.

that

that *Adam*, who ſeemed to be ſo well acquainted with the *Voice of God in the Garden*, * upon his Fall, ſhould never have heard it there before, on other occaſions. In theſe times therefore

in the blood-eating Controverſy. — Eſſay on *Sacrifices* p. 165. *&c.* I am ſorry to find here, that I have been differing from the ingenious Author of *Philemon* to *Hydaſpes*, who in his fifth Part, is ſo far from allowing any kind of Sacrifices to be a Divine Inſtitution, that he declares 'the 'general Notion of the thing itſelf to be in every view of 'it ſo glaring an Abſurdity, that he is amazed that it 'ſhould ever enter into the head of any Rational Creature.' p. 10. I ſhall therefore add a few words more, in conſidering ſome of the Reaſons offered to ſupport this Declaration. Firſt, 'The very Idea of a Divine Being implies in 'it ſuch a ſuperior Excellency of Nature as to be wholly 'out of the reach of our good Offices.' He neither wants nor can receive Benefit from them. *ib.* Nor, Secondly, 'can we ſuppoſe that the Gods ſhould ever be pleaſed 'with the mere waſte of their own Productions,' p. 13. Thirdly, 'It gives one a very degrading Idea of their 'Goodneſs to conſider them as entering into a kind of 'Merchandize with Mankind, in the matter of their Favours,' p. 14. and p. 20, 'The Demand of the Life of 'a perfectly innocent Creature, to be offered up in Sacrifice to God, could give but ſmall encouragement to 'hope that God intended to favour a guilty one.'

But I cannot apprehend that ſuch an Intercourſe as was kept up between God and Mankind, by the forementioned Offerings, muſt neceſſarily be taken in either the Firſt, or Third of theſe Views; ſince the like Intercourſe is not always ſo underſtood, even among Men; ſome of whom

* *Gen.* 3. 8. 10.

God was pleas'd to manifeſt himſelf to the *Senſes* of men, and viſibly conduct them, by the *Angel* of his preſence, in all the chief concernments of Religion. And this *infant* ſtate of the

whom are too far exalted above others to receive any advantage from them, yet nevertheleſs expect ſome dutiful Acknowledgement of the Benefits which they confer on others, and require frequent Teſtimonies of their Love: and why ſhould not we imagine a ſincerely devout Sacrificer to the Deity, able to interpret his Devotion in the ſame ſenſe? or if led to a more groſs interpretation of it, why may we not even ſuppoſe the Deity condeſcending in that caſe to ſet him right, by ſome ſuch kind expoſtulation as the following? *Will I eat the Fleſh of Bulls, or drink the Blood of Goats? If I were hungry I would not tell thee; for the World is mine and the fulneſs thereof. Offer unto God Thankſgiving, and pay thy Vows unto the moſt High. And call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou ſhalt glorify me.* Nor does there ſeem to be any more *Merchandize* in any ſort of Sacrifical Offerings, than in thoſe other of Vows, Prayers, Praiſes, and Thankſgivings, which ſtill make up an eſſential part of our Religion; from their relation to which, the former always derived all their value, [v. *Eſſay*, p. 19, &c.] and were perhaps only a ſtrong, lively manner of expreſſing them; nor probably more ſtrong, and explicit, than might be neceſſary for the times; nor likely to convey any more degrading Ideas of the Divine Goodneſs [at leaſt not more than were adapted to, and unavoidable in the then low ſtate of reaſoning] than does the inward Tribute of *a broken and a contrite Heart*, which is ſtill requiſite on ſome occaſions; as well as the outward, publick profeſſion of our dependance on the Deity, the *rendring to him the Calves of our Lips*;

World muſt ſtand in need of his eſpecial guidance, and protection. They were not yet able (with *Moſes* *) to look up to him *who is inviſible*; and perform a purely rational, and ſpiri-

which, when the underſtandings of Men were ripe for it, and they able to keep up a tolerable ſenſe of Duty by theſe means, have of themſelves been, and are accepted by the ſame *gracious* Being in the room of the other; [*Hoſ.* 14. 2. *Heb.* 13. 15.] though theſe be founded equally on Human Weakneſs, and at a like diſtance from the excellency of the Divine Nature.

As to the *Conſumption* of the Fruit of the Ground in Offerings; why might not men conceive, that the ſame God who had given them all things richly to enjoy, might reaſonably expect a return, as it were, of ſome part of them, merely in token of Gratitude for the reſt; as an exerciſe of their Faith, in a memorial of their Dependance on him for a continuance of them, and a pledge of their Obedience, in applying each to the good purpoſes for which he had beſtowed them? without the leaſt dread of affronting him by an implication that he either wanted ſomething, or reaped Benefit by their Preſents.

Nor need even ſuch as had the moſt imperfect Notions of his Power and Bounty, apprehend this to be any dangerous miſapplication of theſe Gifts, on a perſwaſion that he had required it; though without ſome Tradition of that, *Socrates* himſelf [p. 10.] might perhaps juſtly doubt of the propriety, and acceptableneſs of this kind of Worſhip: as he had the like ſcruples about *Prayer*, [*Plat.* 2. *Alcib.*] as alſo, *Maximus Tyrius*, long after.

But if ever theſe, or any ſuch, Offerings were in fact required, and theſe or the like ends might be ſerved by them,

* *Heb.* 11. 27.

tual Worſhip. They could have no very perfect Notions of his Nature and Providence; nor had they much leiſure for Speculation, and Refinement in theſe Subjects. They were all

them, [otherwiſe we ſhould indeed have no room to believe they were] then will this be far from *a mere uſeleſs waſte*, though the things offered be deſtroy'd: nor indeed can I ſee any material difference between a religious Dedication of ſuch things, and the Deſtruction of them; or how they could be preſented to the Gods at all; if they were ſtill kept for the uſe of their Owners.

The caſe, I apprehend, will not be much different as to the *Life of an innocent Creature*; for if this Creature be conſidered as man's Property, why may not the Oblation of it be aſſigned by way of Compoſition, Mulct or Commutation for ſuch Faults as he is ſenſible of, and ſerve as a ſignificant repreſentation, and acknowledgement of ſuch his ſenſe; and be accepted by the offended Governour of the World, in lieu of a more condign Puniſhment? by virtue of ſuch aſſignment doing away his Guilt, and being a ſufficient Ground of Encouragement for him to hope for a full reſtoration to the Divine Favour; without any farther Import. Though if this ſhould have yet a more diſtant, and extenſive view, [as much removed perhaps from the comprehenſion of Mankind in thoſe times, as ſome others, then very obvious ones, may poſſibly be now from us] it anſwers theſe ends for the preſent never the leſs; and is more like all other parts of the Divine Oeconomy, which ſerve for various purpoſes, immediate and remote.—But if we admit theſe Uſes, they will make it improper for this Rite to have been inſtituted *before the Fall*; which is another Objection, p. 22. And if they will warrant the ſuppoſition of its being inſtituted at all by

Tillers of the Ground, or Keepers of Cattle; employ'd ſufficiently in cultivating and repleniſhing this New World; and through the Curſe, brought on it by their forefather, forced

God, it muſt be inſtituted with a *merciful Deſign*; and as ſuch, every dutiful compliance with it would be conceived, in ſome reſpect, to better the Condition of the Worſhipper, as far as he could carry his thoughts on that Condition; how dark ſoever his Notions might be, as to the time and manner of completing it.

Upon the whole, I cannot help concluding it to be more probable in itſelf, and more analogous to the general courſe of things, that this ſo univerſal a Practiſe of ſacrificing Animals, however odd and unaccountable it may ſeem to be in ſome reſpects at preſent, how much ſoever inferior to ſome modern Notions of the world, and its all-perfect Governour; ſhould owe its Origin to ſome Divine Appointment; be propagated every where by primitive Tradition; and afterwards [as in too many other caſes] by a pretended Imitation, and Improvement, but a real Miſrepreſentation and Abuſe, receive ſuch gradual Alteration, from the Authors of all Superſtition and Vice, as at length to arrive at that degree of Enormity, which this ingenious Writer has ſo well deſcribed. And I ſubmit it to his Candor, whether the ſuppoſition of its coming from one who might have farther views in it than could appear at firſt ſight, or be at once accompliſhed; be not as likely to remove his Difficulties, as attributing it wholly to the Invention of Men, at a time when it is agreed between us, that they were capable of inventing very little; and who, if they could ſee ſo far before them as to ſtrike out ſuch a Form of Worſhip, muſt we may think have likewiſe been appriſed of ſome of the ſame Difficulties; which would always

with him to eat their bread *in the ſweat of their brow*. We may ſuppoſe the generality of them, to have been no better than *Anthropomorphites* *, in their Conceptions of the Divine Being; as many were found to be long after them, in much more knowing Times; [a] and as perhaps a great part of the World yet are, by giving way to their Imagination, notwithſtanding the cleareſt Revelations, and plaineſt Arguments to

always attend it. And laſtly, whenceſoever it did come, whether ſuch a perſwaſion as this Gentleman entertains, of its being fundamentally wrong, and in every light ſo glaring an Abſurdity, be not as hard to reconcile with the Belief [which I preſume we are equally agreed in] of God's expreſs acceptance of the ſame on ſome occaſions; his permiſſion of it all along to his diſtinguiſh'd Favourites; and at laſt formally enjoining, and eſtabliſhing it with the minuteſt Circumſtances; and this, without any ſuch intimation as is given in other caſes, of its being all merely a compliance with ſome of their own Cuſtoms, or their Prejudices.

* The reaſon of this is given at large by the ingenious Author of *the Glory of Chriſt* as God-man. Diſc. 1. S. 1.

[a] 'Lactantius is to prove that God has *Human Paſſions* '— to prevent being miſunderſtood, and to provide a pro-'per Subject for theſe Paſſions, he contends ſtrongly for 'God's having a *Human Form*; no diſcreditable notion at 'that time in the Church.' *Warburton*'s *Divine Legation*, B. 3. S. 4. p. 372. add *Locke* on Human Underſtanding, B. 1. c. 4. S. 16. and *Huetii Origeniana*, L. 2. Q. 1. S. 8. p. 30.

the contrary. Frequent Apparitions then might be neceſſary, to keep up a tolerable ſenſe of Religion among them, and ſecure obedience to the Divine Inſtitutions; [b] and that the Almighty did not appear as frequently as was either neceſſary, or fit to anſwer this end, cannot be concluded from the ſilence of thoſe very ſhort accounts we have in Sacred Hiſtory, as was obſerv'd before.

Beſides, *Adam* himſelf continued nine hundred and thirty years, an eye witneſs of the Power and Providence of God; and could not but reflect on thoſe remarkable inſtances of both, exerted at the beginning of his own Life; [c] and muſt have acquainted the reſt of Mankind with all thoſe Truths relating to the Deity, that were implyed in the Creation of Man, and his firſt ſituation in the World *; as well as his pre-

[b] Και γαρ εικος εν αρχη τε κοσμε επι πλειον βεβοηθησαι την ανθρωπων φυσιν, ἑως, προκοπης γενομενης εις συνεσιν και τας λοιπας αρετας, και την ευρεσιν των τεχνων, δυνηθωσι και καθ ἑαυτους ζην, ὁ χρηζοντες αει επιτροπευοντων και οικονομουντων αυτους μετα παραδοξε επιφανειας των υπηρετημενων τω τε θεε βυληματι. Orig. cont. Celſ. p. 216. Edit. Cant.

[c] See *Allix*'s *Reflections*, B. 1. c. 8. &c.

* How he was able always to convince the World that he was the firſt Man, ſee *Cumberland de Leg. Patriarch.* p. 409, 410.

ſent

ſent ſtate of Puniſhment, and proſpect of a future Redemption; which were exhibited together, and doubtleſs explain'd to him, upon his Fall. He was all that while, a living Monument both of the Juſtice, and Mercy of God; of his extreme hatred, and abhorrence of Sin; as well as his great Love, and long ſuffering toward the Sinner. He was very ſenſible how Sin enter'd into the World, and could not but appriſe his Children of its Author; and at the ſame time inform them, of the Unity of *God*, and his Dominion over the *Evil* one; and aſſure them of his being the Supreme Governour, and Judge of all. For ſo much, I think, might eaſily be gathered from that Tranſaction in Paradiſe, in whatſoever ſenſe we underſtand it; not to mention that the Garden of *Eden*, the great ſcene of this Tranſgreſſion, might perhaps ſtill be viſible. [a] This would produce a tolerable Idea of the Divine Being, and afford ſufficient motives to obey him. And accordingly we find the effects of it, in the righteous Family of *Seth*, who began to *call upon the Name of the Lord* *; or, as that Text is better render'd in the Margin, to *call themſelves by the Name of the*

[a] *Allix's Reflex.* p. 53. and 62.

* *Gen.* 4. 26.

Lord[a]. They ſoon diſtinguiſh'd themſelves from the Poſterity of *Cain*; and for their extraordinary Piety, were entitled the People, or *Sons of God*. Of them, ſometime after, ſprang a perſon ſo very eminent for Goodneſs and Devotion, as to be exempted from *Adam*'s Sentence, and the common lot of his Sons: who, after he had walked with God three hundred years, and *propheſied* to his Brethren *, and forewarn'd them of the approaching Judgement; was *tranſlated, that he ſhould not ſee Death* †. This very remarkable Event, muſt have made the World about him, ſenſible of the good Providence of God, inſpecting and rewarding his faithful Servants; and one would think it ſhould have induced them to look up to a better ſtate than the preſent; where all ſuch might hope at length to ſee and enjoy their Maker. To *Adam* himſelf, if he was then alive (as the *Samaritan* account makes him to be above forty years after) to *Adam*, it muſt have been a lively and affecting inſtance of what he might have enjoy'd, had he kept his Innocence; as well as

[a] See *Shuckford*, V. 1. p. 42, &c. *Van Dale Orig. et Progr. Idol.* c. 2. *Stillingfleet Iren.* c. 3. p. 73. 4to.

* *Jude* 14.

† *Heb.* 11. 5. comp. *Eccl^us.* 44. 14. and Mr. *Arnold* upon Wiſdom, 4. 10.

an

an earneſt of the promis'd Victory over the Evil one; and a ſtrong ground of confidence that he, and the reſt of his Poſterity, ſhould not be left entirely in their preſent ſtate; but ſometime or other, be reſtored to the favour of their Maker; and behold his preſence in Bliſs and Immortality[a]. At the ſame time lived *Lamech*, another Prophet; who was contemporary both with *Adam* and *Noah*, and well acquainted with the Counſels of God; as appear'd from his foretelling that that part of the Curſe which related to the Barrenneſs of the Earth, would be taken off, as it was, in his Son's days[b]. At length, when by the unlawful mixture of the two Families of *Cain* and *Seth*, the latter alſo was corrupted; and the whole World became full of *unbounded Luſt*, and Impurity *; of

[a] See Bp. *Bull*'s Diſcourſes, V. 1. p. 343. V. 2. p. 585, &c. Mr. *Worthington* argues farther, that this Tranſlation of *Enoch* 'was moreover an intimation to Mankind, that 'if they overcame the Depravity of their Nature as he 'did, they ſhould be delivered from the ill conſequences 'of it as he was; the chiefeſt of which was Death, tem-'poral and eternal, both which he avoided:' and this ingenious Author ſuppoſes him to be a Type of many others being able to do the very ſame, *Eſſay*, p. 72, &c.

[b] *Gen.* 5. 29. ſee Bp. *Sherlock*'s *Uſe and Intent.* p. 89, &c. and Dr. *Ogilby* on the Deluge.

* *Gen.* 6. 2.

Rapine

Rapine and Violence †; when thoſe *Giants* in wickedneſs ‡, had filled the Earth with Tyranny, Injuſtice and Oppreſſion; and the whole race of Men were grown entirely *carnal* ‖, and abandon'd: God, whoſe Spirit had been hitherto *ſtriving* with them, was at length obliged, even in mercy to themſelves, as well as their Poſterity, to cut them off; after having raiſed up another Prophet [b], to give them frequent warning of their Fate; and allowed them a hundred and twenty years for Repentance §.

Thus did God make ample proviſion for the Inſtruction, and Improvement of the World, for the firſt ſixteen hundred years; namely by frequent *Appearances*, as we have ſeen; by the *Spirit of Prophecy*, which is by ſome ſuppos'd to have been hereditary in the Heads of Families in thoſe times [c]; and by uninterrupted *Tra-*

† *Gen.* 6. 11. ‡ *v.* 4. ‖ *v.* 3.

[b] *Pet.* 3. 19. *Heb.* 11. 7. *Noah* the eighth, a Preacher of Righteouſneſs; (2 *Pet.* 2. 5.) or as ſome more juſtly render it, *the eighth Preacher*. [ſee *Jenkin*, V. 1. p. 46. and *Pool* in loc. N. 4.] For he was neither the eighth *Perſon* in deſcent from *Adam*, nor does his being *one* of the eight Perſons in the Ark, ſeem to be a conſtruction either very natural, or pertinent. Add *Pearſon on the Creed*, Part 2. p. 115. 2d Edit.

§ *Gen.* 6. 3.

[c] See *Jurieu Crit. Hiſt.* V. 1. p. 34.

dition:

tion: there being but two Generations from *Adam* to *Noah*; ſo that we cannot imagine that the Knowledge and true Worſhip of God, during that time, could be entirely loſt in any part of the World.

But we are to remember, that the World was ſtill but in its ſtate of *Childhood*; which it moſt aptly reſembled, in thoſe extraordinary Aids, and Supports afforded it; in the repeated inſtances of that paternal care, and tenderneſs, with which the Creator watched over it: and I have been the more particular in examining whence it might derive its Notices of God and Religion, and how far theſe could poſſibly extend; in order to obviate ſome Miſtakes, which are commonly made in the Hiſtory of thoſe Times, by ſetting out wrong; and ſuppoſing the firſt Man to have been once ſuperior to all his Poſterity [d], both in natural Abilities, and actual Knowledge, becauſe more innocent than they; and imagining the primitive Religion more perfect, becauſe it was more naked, plain, and ſimple than that in after times: by which means, we are forced to make the State of the World often go backwards, to riſe and fall again; and be filled with Breaks and

[d] Vid. *Gen. Dict.* Art. *Adam*, p. 228, &c. or *South*'s very extraordinary Sermon on that Subject.

Ine-

Inequalities; inſtead of obſerving that regular, even Progreſs, which will appear in all parts of the Divine Oeconomy.

To proceed. After the *Deluge*, God is pleaſed to converſe again, and make another more clear and extenſive Covenant with Mankind in the perſon of *Noah*; who was a new inſtance both of his Power, Juſtice, and Goodneſs; and whoſe Family had been ſufficiently convinc'd of his ſupreme Dominion over the Earth, and Heavens; of his utter abhorrence of Sin; and his determin'd will not to let it go unpuniſhed. Nor could they, or their Children, for ſome time, want any other Argument to enforce Obedience, Fear, and Worſhip. [a] The Knowledge of mankind therefore after the Flood, muſt for a conſiderable time be better than ever it was before; and it might ſafely be propagated by Tradition; and did not ſtand in need of any farther Revelation. But when by degrees many of them * had corrupted this Tradition in the moſt eſſential parts, eſpecially with relation to the Object of their Worſhip; and

[a] See *Allix*. B. 1. c. 13. The Obſervations and Reflections they might make on this extraordinary Tranſaction are finely imagined by Dr. *Winder*. Hiſt. of Knowl. c. 5. S. 2. 3. 4.

* V. *Winder* Hiſt. of Knowl. p. 110 *&c.* *Patrick* in *Gen.* 11. 2.

in-

ſtead of one ſupreme God, had ſet up ſeveral Orders of inferior ones; and worſhip'd all the Hoſt of Heaven; (as they began to do in the time of *Peleg*, the fifth from *Noah*) and at the ſame time were uniting under one Head, and forming an *univerſal Empire*; and erecting a Monument, to preſerve and perpetuate this their Union: in order to prevent their being all corrupted at once, God ſaw it neceſſary to *come down*,[a] and diſperſe them into ſeveral diſtinct Colonies, by dividing them into ſo many *Languages*, [or cauſing that *Diſcord* amongſt them[b]] which made their future intercourſe impracticable; and thereby render'd it impoſſible for any one ſpecies of Idolatry to be univerſally eſtabliſhed; nay gave a conſiderable check to the progreſs of falſe Worſhip in general; which had moſt probably been introduced by the Rulers[c] of thoſe times; and for which reaſon, their People then might be driven from them, to hinder its being impoſed, as God's own People were afterwards diſperſed every where to

[a] *Gen.* 11. 5. 7. ſee *Le Clerc* upon the place, with *Winder* Hiſt. of Knowl. p. 118.

[b] *Pſ.* 55. 9. *Le Clerc* ibid. Add 1 *Cor.* 1. 10. and *Vitringa Obſerv. Sacr.* L. 1. c. 9. §. 6, *&c. Shuckford*, B. 3. V. 1. p. 146. or *Huchinſon on the Confuſion of Tongues.*

[c] See *Shuckford*, V. 1. B. 5. p. 353, *&c.* The ſame Author gives a probable *reaſon* for this. V. 2. B. 9. p. 457, *&c.*

tions

cure it. After the *Diſperſion*, particular Revelations were in all probability vouchſafed, wherever Men were capable of improving by them, and diſpoſed to regard them. We find *Peleg* had his Name prophetically given from that *Diſperſion*, which was to happen in his Days;* and not only his Father *Eber*, but all the Heads of Families, mentioned in the eleventh of *Geneſis*, from *Noah* to *Abraham*, are with ſome reaſon ſuppoſed to have had the Spirit of Propheſy, on many Occaſions. However *Noah* was undoubtedly both Prieſt and Prophet, and living till *Abraham* was near ſixty Years old, might well be able to keep up a tolerable Senſe of Religion in the World; which was then but very thinly inhabited.[a] His religious Son *Shem* likewiſe was living ſo long as *Jacob*'s Time, and could not but be a great Means of continuing the Faith and Worſhip of the true God among his *Deſcendants*.[b] But notwithſtanding a few

* *Gen.* 10. 25. v. *Winder*, p. 130.

[a] *Gen.* 13. 9. vid. Part 3. p. 108. Note[a]; and *Newton* Chron. p. 185—6. The *Ark* itſelf, a certain Monument of the Deluge, continued ſeveral Ages after *Abraham*, and preſerv'd the Memory of it, even among Pagans. v. *Lucian de Dea Syra*. *Allix Reflex.* p. 68. *Joſeph. Antiq.* L. 1. c. 3.

[b] Concerning the Notices of Religion in the World about this Time, ſee *Allix*, B. 1. c. 14. *Winder*, c. 9.

righteous

righteous Men, and ſome Remains of true Religion; Idolatry, with its perpetual attendants Vice and Superſtition, [c] had in a little Time ſo far prevail'd among the Sons of *Noah*, as to make it highly expedient for God, as well to ſhorten the Lives of Men, [d] as to withdraw his Preſence from the generality, who had made themſelves unfit for ſuch Communication; and to ſingle out ſome particular People, to bear his Name, and be his more immediate Servants; and thereby preſerve his Worſhip pure, in ſome Part of the World, amidſt the various Corruptions that were going to overſpread it. With this View *Abraham* is called; who had been driven out of an Idolatrous Nation, in all Probability for oppoſing and refuſing to comply with its Idolatry; [e] and after many remarkable Trials of

[c] The Attendants and Effects of Idolatry are well deſcribed by the Author of *Wiſdom*, c. 14. 23—29. *So that there reigned in all Men, without Exception, Blood, Manſlaughter, Theft and Diſſimulation, Corruption, Unfaithfulneſs, Tumults, Perjury.* 25. *Diſquieting of good Men, Forgetfulneſs of good Turns, Defiling of Souls, Changing of Kind, Diſorder in Marriages, Adultery and ſhameleſs Uncleanneſs*, 26. add c. 12. 4, 5, 6. v. *Arnold* in loc.

[d] Concerning this great Change in the Divine Oeconomy, ſee Part 3.

[e] *Maim.* M. Nev. p. 421. See *Chandler* Vind. O. T. Part. 2. p. 474. *Judith* 5. 8. *Shuckford*, V. 1. B. 5. pag. 269.

his

his Faith and Conſtancy, admitted to a particular Intimacy, and *Friendſhip* with his Maker. God enters into a peculiar Covenant with him, and engages to be his preſent Guide, Protector and Defender; and to beſtow, not only all temporal Benefits on him, and on his Seed; [a] but to make ſome of them the Means of conveying a Bleſſing of a higher Kind to all the Nations of the Earth; who ſhould in an extraordinary manner be *bleſſed through him*. *Abraham*, no doubt, was fix'd upon for his ſingular Piety, and Truſt in God; and entitled to theſe high Privileges by his extraordinary Virtues; for whoſe ſake (or rather for the ſake of encouraging and rewarding of which Virtues) the ſame Privileges were continued to a part of his Poſtetity, though far leſs worthy of them. But we cannot think that it was ſo much on his own account that he was thus diſtinguiſhed; or that *for his ſake only*, * *Faith*, or Sincerity is ſaid to be imputed to him for Righteouſneſs; but rather for the common Benefit of Mankind was all this done; and in order to make him an In-

[a] That the original Promiſe (*Geneſ.* 12. 7. 13. 14, 15. 15. 18, *&c.*) was made to Abraham's Seed in general, though the eſpecial Covenant was reſtrained to a part of them, ſee Remarks on that Part of the 3d Vol. of the *Moral Philoſopher*, p. 89, 90.

* *Rom.* 4. 24.

ſtru-

ſtrument, in the Hand of Providence (and a fit one he was) to convey the ſame Faith, and Fear of God, to all the Nations round him. And accordingly we find him greatly favour'd, and diſtinguiſhed among the neighbouring Princes; and *Kings reproved for his ſake*; who are acquainted with his Prophetic Character, and deſire his Interceſſion with God. ‡ Hiſtory tells us of his converſing on the Subject of Religion, with the moſt learned *Egyptians*, [b] and being very highly eſteemed by them; from whom probably, they afterwards derived the Rite of Circumciſion, among other Inſtitutes of Religion. [c] We are inform'd that his Name was had in the greateſt Veneration all over the Eaſt; that the *Magians*, *Sabians*, *Perſians*, and *Indians* all gloried in him, as the great Reformer

‡ *Gen.* 12. 17. and 20. 7.

[b] *Joſephus* L. 1. c. 9. contr. *Apion.* paſſim. *Damaſcen.* in *Euſeb.* Præp. Evang. L. 9. c. 18.

[c] *Shuckford*, B. 5. pag. 322, *&c.* and B. 7. p. 132, *&c.* Others derive it from *Joſeph. Univerſ. Hiſt.* V. 1. p. 527. Note R. and pag. 453. Note U. add *Jenkin*, V. 1. p. 97. *Grot. Ep.* 327. Others ſuppoſe it introduced by *Iſhmael*, [*Rev. Exam.* V. 2. p. 190] or his Poſterity the *Shepherds*, as is made very probable by the Ingenious Author of Remarks on part of the 3d Vol. of the *Moral Philoſopher* p. 59, *&c.*

of their Religion.[d] And as he was let into the various Counſels of the Almighty, and taught to reaſon, and reflect upon them; as he was fully appriſed of his juſt Judgement in the miraculous Overthrow of the four wicked Cities, with the particular Circumſtances of it; † as well as his moſt gracious Intent of providing a Redeemer for all Mankind, and *rejoiced to ſee his Day,* ‡ *and ſaw it*; 'tis very probable, that

[d] *Prideaux*, Part. 1. B. 4. p. 225. Comp. *Hide de Rel. Vet. Perſ.* c. 2. and 3. and *Univerſ. Hiſt.* paſſim. 'Tis remarkable that the *Lacedemonians* retained the Memory of him for above 1600 Years, and under their King *Areus* claimed Kindred with the *Jews*, as being of the Stock of *Abraham*. 1 *Maccab.* 12. 21, &c. *Joſeph. Ant.* L. 12. 5. [ſee Dr. *Waterland*'s Poſtſcript to *Scrip. Vind.* Part. 2. p. 142. or *Jenkin*, V. 1. pag. 53. and 90. How this might come about, ſee *Stillingfleet Or. S.* B. 3. c. 4. or *Shuckford*, B. 10. pag. 51.] nor is it unlikely that from the *Abrahamans*, or Sons of *Abraham*, the *Brachmans* might deſcend, and derive their Name. *Newt. Chron.* p. 351. 'Tis likewiſe obſerv'd that the *Perſians* adhered ſo ſtrictly to the Religion of *Abraham*, as to keep clear of the moſt groſs Idolatry all along.

† *Gen.* 18.

‡ *Joh.* 8. 56. ἠγαλλιάσατο, *geſtiebat*, long'd earneſtly. See Mr. *Warburton*'s Comment on this Text. *Div. Leg.* V. 2. Part. 2. p. 592, &c. 'Tis Pity that he did not give a farther Confirmation to it, by obſerving that this Scene moſt probably was placed upon the very Spot where *Chriſt* actually ſuffered. See *Crit. Notes*, *Geneſ.* 22. 1, 2. Comp. *Pool.* Synopſ. ib.

he

he and his Family would propagate theſe Doctrines, together with their Conſequences, whereſoever they went.[a]

But though the Deity was pleas'd to manifeſt himſelf, in a more frequent and familiar manner, to *Abraham*; yet were not the reſt of the world quite overlooked. There were no doubt many other ſhining lights, and eminent Profeſſors of the true Religion, who like *Lot* in the midſt of *Sodom*, were as eminently preſerv'd, and ſupported in it: we ſee *Laban*, and *Bethuel* acknowledging the *Lord*; ‖ and the former of them favour'd with a Viſion; § nor was the Spirit of Prophecy, or Divine Revelation, wholly confined to *Abraham*, or to his Family. In *Canaan* we meet with *Melchizedeck*, King, and Prieſt of the moſt High God;[b] who is acquainted with the Bleſſing promiſed to *Abra-*

[a] See Dr. *Burnet*'s *Boyle*'s *Lect.* pag. 536. Fol. 'God 'called *Abraham* out of his own Country, and made him 'travel from Place to Place, to make him thereby famous 'in the world, and to invite men by that means to in-'quire after his Profeſſion, his Hopes, and his Religion.' *Allix Reflex.* B. 2. c. 12.

‖ *Gen.* 24. 31, 50. § *Gen.* 31. 24.

[b] Moſt probably the Patriarch *Shem* himſelf. vid. *Cumberland de Leg. Patriarch.* p. 428, &c. *Bedford Scrip. Chron.* p. 318. The ſame opinion is maintain'd by many other Authors mentioned by *Calmet.* Dict. V. 2. p. 177.

ham, and confirms it to him; and to whom the Patriarch himſelf pays Homage. *Abimeleck* King of *Gerar* receives an admonition from the *Lord*, and readily pays a due regard to it; † the ſame ſenſe of Religion and Virtue deſcends to his Son; ‡ from whence we learn, that this Country was at that time far from arriving at that great degree of Corruption, which it reached in a few Generations after. In *Arabia* we find *Job*, and his three Friends, all of Regal Dignity, [c] as ſome ſay, entering into the deepeſt points of Divinity; and agreed about the Unity, Omnipotence and Spirituality of God; the Juſtice of his Providence, and other Fundamentals of Religion; as alſo mentioning a Divine Inſpiration, as no very uncommon thing. * *Eliphaz* had his Viſions, and Revelations † as well as *Job*, though in a lower degree; [a] and the latter expreſſes his belief of a *Reſurrection*, ‡ and a general *Judgement*, in much ſtronger and clearer Terms, than are elſewhere to be met with near his time; if according to the Seven-

† *Gen.* 20.

‡ *Gen.* 26. 10, 11.

[c] V. Sept. Vers. in fin. *Job*. *Tobit* 2. 16. vulg. Lat. — Job inſultabant *Reges*.

* *Gen.* 32. 8. 33. 15. † c. 4. 12, 15, 16.

[a] See *Patrick* Append. to Paraphr. on *Job*. p. 59.

‡ C. 19.

ty,

ty, he was the fifth from *Abraham*, [b] or according to others, contemporary either with him, or *Iſaac*. [c] Though, in truth, it is not very eaſy to ſettle either the Date of that Piece, or the Import of ſeveral expreſſions in it. Some look upon it as a *Jewiſh* Parable, or allegorical Drama; and bring it down as low as the Captivity: nor are they without their reaſons. [d] However, all ſeem to agree that, whoever was the Author of it, it is built upon a real Character; and that decorum kept up, as to ſuit moſt of the Notions in it to the Patriarchal Times.

To proceed: In *Chaldea* we meet with *Ba-*

[b] See *Calmet*'s Dictionary, or *Coſtard*'s Obſervations, p. 13.

[c] *Jurieu. Crit. Hiſt.* V. 1. p. 18. *Shuckford*, B. 7. p. 136. *&c. Selden de Jur. Nat.* &c. L. 7. c. 11.

[d] See ſome of them in the *Five Letters* on Inſpiration, p. 99. and *Le Clerc* on *Job* 1, 6. 23, 12. 26, 12. 38, 3. 42, 7. But this is put beyond all doubt, by the incomparable Author of *Div. Leg.* B. 6. S. 2. p. 543, *&c.* who has given us a beautiful account of this whole book, and clear'd up all the Difficulties in it, which uſed ſo much to perplex Interpreters; and particularly makes it appear, that the words in Queſtion, can relate only to a temporal Deliverance; nor indeed would the other ſenſe of them well agree with any of the times which have been fix'd on for the writing of this Book. Add *Coſtard*'s Obſervations p. 21 *&c.* and Mr. *Johnſon*'s Preface on Alphabetical Letters. Life *&c.* p. 249.

laam, a true Prophet; [e] yet one who from his own perſonal merit, had no particular pretenſions to the Word of God; ſince he ſo notoriouſly loved, and followed *the Wages of Unrighteouſneſs*; and at length juſtly periſhed among the idolatrous *Midianites*; * having taught them to ſeduce and corrupt thoſe whom he knew to be the choſen People of God. † Conſidering, I ſay, the Character of this Perſon, he ſeems to have had no particular Title to the Gift of Prophecy; [f] and therefore we may ſuppoſe that in thoſe days it was not ſo uncommon a favour; but might be conferred on many others like-

[e] See *Patrick* Append. to Paraphr. on *Job* p. 60.

* Numb. 31. 8.

† *Numb.* 24. 9. and 31. 16. *Mic.* 6. 5. *Rev.* 2. 14.

[f] Whatever might have been his behaviour before, it was certainly very bad in the whole of this affair, during which, he had the fulleſt Revelations, and yet was always either directly diſobeying, or endeavouring to defeat the intent of them; as may be ſeen in Bp. *Butler*'s excellent Sermon on that Subject, and Dr. *Shuckford*'s Connection. B. 12. p. 314, *&c.* As to the particular *manner* of theſe Revelations, we may I think ſuppoſe them to have been all made in Viſion, Dream or *Trance* [as our Tranſlators have interpreted one hereafter mentioned] though from the narration it is as difficult here, as in ſome other parts of Scripture, to diſtinguiſh between real Fact in the moſt literal ſenſe, and viſionary, ſymbolical Repreſentations, ſuch as occur in *Job*, c. 1. v. 6, - 12. et ib. c. 38. 1 *Kings*, c. 22. v. 19. - 23, *&c.* *Ezekiel* 4. 6. *&c.* *Zechariah* 1. 2. and perhaps *Gen.* 32. 2, 24. vid. *Theodoret.* That of the *Angel* meet-

wiſe, in other parts of the world, [g] whoſe Hiſtory is not delivered down to us: and upon the whole, it ſeems probable that, as *in every Nation thoſe who feared God and worked Righteouſneſs, were accepted of him*, * ſo he was pleaſed alſo to manifeſt himſelf, where ever men were diſpoſed to make a proper uſe of that Manifeſtation; and in ſuch manner, and degree, as

meeting *Balaam* in the way, ſeems to be thus explained by himſelf. *Numb.* 24. 3, 4. (when rightly rendered) where he alludes to the very Circumſtance of his eyes being ſhut for ſome time c. 22. 31. Nor does it ſeem very probable that he, who was ſaid to be in the retinue of the Princes of *Moab*. *Numb.* 22. 21. ſhould at any Time be ſo far ſeparated from them in the way, as to give room for ſuch a remarkable Tranſaction, without the Knowledge of any of them, as by the Account it appears to be. 'Ita dico, in negotio 'Bilcami, totum illud quod in via ei contigiſſe dicitur, 'et quomodo aſina loquuta fuerit, in viſione Prophetica 'factum eſſe, quia in fine Hiſtoriae explicatur quod *An*-'*gelus Dei* loquutus fuerit.' *Maimon.* Mor. *Nevoch.* P. 2. c. 42. To the ſame Purpoſe *R. Levi Ben Gerſom.* and *Philo* ſeems to be of the ſame Opinion, by his Omiſſion of this Circumſtance, as is obſerved by Dr. *Shuckford*, B. 12. p. 315. Add *Memoirs of Lit.* for *April* 1710. p. 14, *&c.* *Leibnitz* endeavours to prove the ſame, in his Hiſtory of *Balaam*, *Gen. Dict.* v. 6. p. 678. Which I think is pretty clear in his Caſe, though ſome of thoſe others abovementioned may perhaps belong to that Species of Revelation by *Action*, which Mr. *Warburton* explains at large, *Div. Leg.* B. 4. S. 4. and B. 6. S. 5.

[g] See *Judg.* 7. 13, *&c.* and Notes below.

* *Acts* 10. 35.

would beſt anſwer the ends of his good Providence; and moſt effectually promote the Intereſt of Religion. Not to inſiſt upon the numberleſs Traditions of ſupernatural appearances, and the common Belief of them, all over the world; [h] which notion can hardly be ſuppoſed to have ariſen at firſt without foundation, though numberleſs Impoſtures (which yet are Imitations of ſomething real) have indeed rendered all reports of that kind, for theſe many Ages, very ſuſpicious.

But to proceed. When for the Reaſons abovementioned, and perhaps many others, it had pleaſed God to adopt *Abraham*, and part of his Poſterity, in a peculiar manner, and to eſtabliſh his Covenant with them; * we find all poſſible care and condeſcenſion uſed, to train them up by degrees, in ſuitable notions of their Creator; a frequent Correſpondence held with them; and new Promiſes daily given; to ſtrengthen and confirm their Faith, to fix and preſerve their Dependence on the God of Heaven. He reveales himſelf to *Iſaac* and *Rebecca*; and foretells the Condition of their two Sons; † renews the Promiſe made to *Abraham*; ‡ and

[h] See *Patrick* on *Numb.* 22. 9. Append. to *Job.* 60, &c. *Huet. Quæſt. Alnetan.* c. 2. N. 1. 2. *Shuckford*, B. 1. p. 47.

* *Rom.* 9. 5. † *Gen.* 25. 22, 23. ‡ *Gen.* 26. 24.

bleſſes

bleſſes his ſon *Iſaac*; miraculouſly increaſes his Subſtance; and ſoon makes him the envy of the neighbouring Princes. ‖ He converſes in the ſame manner with *Jacob*; and repeats the ſame Promiſe; § gives him the Right of Primogeniture; and engages to be with him, and keep him, in all Places whither he ſhould go.* This he confirms by many extraordinary Bleſſings; and frequent Appearances; † vouchſafing to talk with him Face to Face; ‡ to beſtow all kinds of Riches on him; and ſtrike the Terror of him into all the Cities round about. * And yet we find all this little enough to keep up, even in *Jacob*, a tolerable ſenſe of Duty, and Dependence on his God: After the firſt Viſion he is ſurpriſed, and heſitates; and ſeems to make a kind of ſtipulation with his Maker. *If*, ſays he, *God will be with me, and will keep me in this Way that I go, and will give me Bread to eat, and Raiment to put on, ſo that I come again to my Father's Houſe in Peace; then ſhall the Lord be my God:* † that is, if he will preſerve and proſper me in my Undertakings, he ſhall be my God, rather than any other; and upon

‖ *Gen.* 12. 13, 14. § *Gen.* 28. 13, 14. * *v.* 15.
† *Gen.* 32. 1. 35. 1,—9.
‡ *Gen.* 32. 29. * cap. 35. 5.
† *Gen.* 28. 21, 22. See *Le Clerc* on the Place.

that

that Condition only. And it appears not to have been till after many ſuch Revelations, Bleſſings, and Deliverances, and being reminded of his Promiſe; ‡ that he ſet himſelf, in earneſt, to reform the Religion of his own Family, by driving out all ſtrange Gods. ‖ *Then* Jacob *ſaid unto his Houſehold, and to all that were with him, Put away the ſtrange Gods that are among you, and be clean; and change your Garments, and let us ariſe and go up to* Bethel; *and I will make there an Altar unto God, who anſwered me in the Day of my Diſtreſs, and was with me in the Way which I went.*[b]

Thus was God obliged to treat, even with the *Patriarchs* themſelves, by way of poſitive *Covenant*, and expreſs Compact; to promiſe to be their God, if they would be his People; to give them a Portion of preſent temporal Bleſſings, as introductory to, and an Earneſt of fu-

‡ c. 35. 1. ‖ c. 35. 2, 3.

[b] The Idolatry here mentioned, may perhaps be thought chiefly to relate to the *Shechemite* Women in *Jacob*'s Houſehold, *Gen.* 34. 29. See *Shuckford*, B. 7. pag. 164. However, that he himſelf had yet but very imperfect Notions of the Deity, particularly of his *Omnipreſence*, is obſerved by *Le Clerc* on *Geneſ.* 28. 16. and to the ſame Purpoſe *Cyrill. Alex.* L. 4. p. 115. there cited.

ture,

ture,[c] ſpiritual ones; and engage them in his ſervice by immediate Rewards; till they could be led on to higher Views; and were prepared, by the bringing in of a better Hope, to draw nigh unto him. And we may obſerve what Care was always taken, to ſuit the ſeveral Diſpenſations to the State of the World, and introduce each as ſoon as it was wanted, and in ſuch a way as was moſt neceſſary, to correct Diſorders and reform Abuſes, as they roſe; and thereby keep up a Face of Religion; and gradually increaſe the Subſtance of it: in the ſame manner, as Providence always took Care to impart to Mankind, ſo much Knowledge of the World, the ways of cultivating it, and Arts of Living, as was requiſite to make Life a Bleſſing to them; though their Knowledge of both kinds, was neither of ſo refined a Nature, nor ſo high a Degree, as it muſt grow to, by the Experience and Improvements of After-Ages. Mankind were ſcarcely got out of their *Childhood* yet, with regard to what may be called the *Theory* of *Religion*; and notwithſtanding there might

[c] That from the Beginning of the World each Covenant, or Bleſſing, was to be underſtood as a *Pledge* of other diſtant and ſuperior ones, may be ſeen in an *Eſſay on the ſeveral Diſpenſations of God*, by the late Lord *Barrington*, p. 20, 24, 25, 59, 62, 69.

always

always be ſome extraordinary Perſons who had a more enlarged Proſpect of Things, and entertain'd more worthy Sentiments of the Divine Providence, ſuch as *Enoch*, *Noah*, *Abraham*, and the like; yet theſe were far ſuperior to the Times in which they lived; and we have reaſon to think that the generality, both in this, and ſome later Ages, extended their Views no farther than the preſent Life, and its Conveniences: [a] and though, from the confuſed Remains of ancient Tradition, they acknowledged ſome Power above them; and frequently applied thither for Direction in their Affairs; yet it was in the petty Affairs of this World only; and their Belief and Worſhip were accordingly. How many of theſe Superior Powers there might be, or how far their Influence might reach, they knew not: uncertain whether there was one ſupreme Governour of the whole

[a] This ſeems to have been the Caſe even with *Abraham* himſelf for ſome time, who upon having this extraordinary Promiſe made to him by God in a Viſion, *Gen.* 15. 1. *I am thy Shield, and thy exceeding great Reward*; riſes no higher in his Anſwer, than only to requeſt an Heir for his Subſtance. *v.* 2. 3. *And Abram ſaid, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, ſeeing I go childleſs, and the Steward of my Houſe is this Eliezer of Damaſcus? And Abram ſaid, Behold, to me thou haſt given no Seed; and lo, one born in my Houſe is mine Heir.*

World,

World, or many coordinate Powers, preſiding over each Country,* or Climate, or particular Place; † Gods of the *Hills*, and of the *Valleys*; as they were term'd in After-Times. ‡ They thought the more of theſe they could engage in their Intereſt, the better; and therefore where-ever they came, like the *Samaritans*, they ſought the manner of *the God of the Land*; and ſerved him together with their own Gods. ‖ Thus was the World running apace into Idolatry, and ready to loſe the very Notion of the true God, and his Worſhip; had he not been pleaſed to interpoſe, and take effectual care to preſerve them in ſome one Nation; to be kept apart from the common Contagion, and made, as it were the Repoſitory of true Religion; and a Channel to convey it to the reſt of Mankind; as ſoon, and in as high a Degree, as they ſhould become capable of receiving it. To this Purpoſe, he makes Way for the Removal of *Jacob* and his Family, to one of the moſt improv'd and poliſh'd Parts of the World at that Time; and introduces them into it, in ſo advantageous a manner, as to give them Opportunity of imparting ſomewhat of the true Re-

* 2 *Kings* 18. 34, 35. † See *Numb.* 23. 13, 27.
‡ 1 *Kings* 20. 23, 28. vid. *Calmet.* ‖ 2 *Kings* 17. 33.

ligion,

ligion, with Advantage, to the moſt conſiderable Families in it; and without any Danger of ſharing their Corruptions. They are placed by themſelves upon the Borders of *Egypt*, where they multiply exceedingly; yet by their very Occupation* are ſtill kept a ſeparate People; and afterwards rendered more averſe to the Manners and Religion of their Neighbours, by a long and ſevere Oppreſſion. Which though it might at firſt perhaps have chiefly been occaſioned by their Oppoſition to Idolatry; † yet became very neceſſary, both to keep up that Oppoſition; and to inure them to Reſtraint and Government; and that it might have the Effects intended, but not proceed ſo far as to reduce them to an entire Subjection, and Conformity to that more potent Nation, through a Deſpair of any Deliverance; the preciſe Time of this their Trial, was foretold to *Abraham*;* and as ſoon as it had been accompliſhed, and they had cryed for Help to their God; † they are brought back, in as wonderful a Way as they had been ſent thither; which alſo was foretold to *Jacob*, ‡ and repeated by *Joſeph*; ‖

* See *Geneſ.* 46. 33, 34.

† See Mr. *Chandler* Vind. of O. T. pag. 487.

* *Acts* 7. 6. † *Exod.* 2. 23. ‡ *Gen.* 46. 4. and 48. 21.

‖ *Gen.* 50. 24, 25.

all

all the Circumſtances whereof are at large related in their Hiſtory: And, I muſt add, with all thoſe Characters of Truth and Conſiſtency, which might have been ſhewn (were this a Place for it) to receive new Confirmation, from every ſuch Attempt to burleſque and expoſe it, as is made by a late profligate Writer. [a]

The God of *Iſrael* having at length magnified himſelf over the *Egyptians* and their Gods, [b] by a Series of the moſt aſtoniſhing Miracles; and reſcued his People from them, in ſuch a manner as muſt ſtrike the utmoſt Surpriſe and Terror into the whole Land; and ſpread his Name much farther, by means of the many Strangers that uſed to travel thither; [c] in order to be acquainted with the Hiſtory of that famous Nation, from whom the greateſt Part of the World derived their Policy and Religion: [d] having thus, I ſay, made his Name great among the Heathen; as well as work'd ſo conſpicuous a Deliverance for his choſen People, as might, one would think, have been ſufficient to en-

[a] *Moral Philoſopher.* Introd. to v. 3.

[b] *Exod.* 12. 12. *Numb.* 33. 4. 2 *Sam.* 7. 23.

[c] See the Notes below, with Mr. *Chandler's* Vindication of the Hiſtory of the Old Teſt. Part. 2. p. 464, *&c.* and pag. 499.

[d] Vid. *Diod. Sic.* L. 1. *Herodot.* L. 2. c. 43, *&c.*

gage

gage them for ever in his Service; he proceeds to inſtruct, and exerciſe them for ſome Time in the Wilderneſs; he exhorts, and intreats them to their Duty, and warns them againſt all the Vices of the People round about; gives them Statutes, and Judgements more righteous * than thoſe of any other Nation; and ſuch as were to be a Model to the reſt of the World; [e] ſends his *Angel before them, to keep them in the Way*; † takes upon himſelf the civil Government of them; [f] and by his Preſence guides, guards, directs them in all their Undertakings. He conducts them through the neighbouring Nations, with repeated Signs and Wonders; [g] and continues

* *Nehem* 9. 13.

[e] V. *Joſeph.* contr. *Ap. Selden de Jur. Gent.* &c. paſſim.

† *Exod.* 23. 20.

[f] The Neceſſity for this is well explain'd by Mr. *Warburton. Div. Leg.* B. 5. S. 2. p. 366.—374, *&c.*

[g] Numb. 14. 14. *They have heard that thou, Lord, art among this People, that thou, Lord, art ſeen Face to Face, and that thy Cloud ſtandeth over them, and that thou goeſt before them by Day-time in a Pillar of a Cloud, and in a Pillar of Fire by Night*; v. 15. — *The Nations have heard the Fame of thee.* add *Deut.* 2. 25. *Joſh.* 2. 10. 1 *Sam.* 4. 8. 6. 6. which Places, by the way, furniſh us with an Anſwer to that Objection of the *Moral Philoſopher*, V. 3. pag. 183. that 'had God given any ſuch—Authority to the *Iſra-*'*elites*, as is hereafter mention'd—he would have let the 'People of *Paleſtine* know it, and in ſome authentic way

or

to try and diſcipline them, till they were at length tolerably well attach'd to his Government, and eſtabliſh'd in his Worſhip; till they were fit to poſſeſs the promis'd Land; and till the preſent Inhabitants were ripe for Deſtruction*. At their entrance into it, he gives them more ſuch Ordinances[b], both of a ceremonial and moral kind, as were beſt ſuited to their Temper, and Circumſtances; and adapted every way to prevent the Dangers, and correct the Irregularities, which they were conſtantly liable to[c]; as well as to prefigure, and by degrees

'or other aſſured them, that he had given away their 'Country to Strangers and Foreigners; and that if they 'did not leave the Land, and give up all their natural 'lawful Poſſeſſions, Rights and Properties, peaceably and 'without oppoſition, they muſt be all cut to pieces, Men, 'Women, and Children:' though this was not the truth of the caſe, of which more below. See *S. Browne*'s Anſw. to *Chriſtianity as old*, &c. p. 373, 374.

* *Gen.* 15. 16.

[b] *Deut.* 1. 3. 5. 27. 31. *Nehem.* 9. 14.

[c] See Dr. *Burnet*'s *Boyle*'s *Lect.* p. 541. Fol. and the excellent Author of *Div. Leg.* V. 2. B. 4. S. 6. 'It ſeems not 'to have been God's intention at firſt to lay upon them 'ſuch numbers of Ceremonies; for it was only after the 'commiſſion of the Sin of the Golden Calf, that God laid 'on them that heavy and troubleſome yoak, on purpoſe 'to employ all their time, and ſo keep them from falling 'into Idolatry again.' *Allix Reflex.* p. 203. Comp. *Spencer de Leg. Heb.* L. 1. c. 4. S. 4. *Burnet de Fid. et Off.* p. 17.

prepare them for [d], a more perfect Diſpenſation under the *Meſſiah*. The moral part breath'd nothing but Equity, and Benevolence; it diſſwaded them from all kinds of Cruelty, and Oppreſſion; by reminding them of their late heavy Sufferings; and inculcated the greateſt Humanity, both toward each other, toward Strangers, Servants, Enemies; and even the Beaſts of the field [e]. The Ceremonial parts

from *Jer.* 7. 22. 23. [on the other ſide ſee *Shuckford*, V. 3. p. 151.] If this be a true account of the *Jewiſh* Inſtitution, then though it really was, what it is term'd, a *Yoke of Bondage*, yet nevertheleſs it might well be impoſed by God himſelf, as being the fitteſt thing for the People to whom, and the times in which it was deliver'd, and conſequently not unworthy of having God for its Author; as a looſe modern Writer wou'd inſinuate, *Moral Philoſopher*, V. 1. p. 51, &c. The various wiſe and good Ends ſerv'd in each part of the *Hebrew Ritual*, may be ſeen in *Lowman*'s Rational Paſs. That it cou'd not have been more *perfect* conſiſtently with the chief of theſe Ends, *viz.* its preparing men for a better ſtate of Religion under the *Meſſiah*, ib. p. 3. c. 3.

[d] See Dr. *Burnett. Boyle*'s *Lect.* Fol. 547. or Dr. *Berriman*, Serm. 23.

[e] *Exod.* 22. 21.-27. and 23. 5,6,9,-12. *Deut.* 5. 14. 10. 18. 14. 21. 16. 11. and 22. 1.-4. 6,7. 23. 7. 24. 10, &c. 25. 1.-4. 26. 12. 27. 19. *Lev.* 14. 9,10. 19. 23.-37. and 25. 35.-38. ſee *Leland*'s Anſw. to *Chriſtianity as old*, &c. V. 2. p. 447, &c. *Le Clerc* on *Gen.* 8, 9, 10. *Philo. de Charitate. Joſeph.* contr. *Ap.* L. 2.

were

were ſolemn and ſplendid [f], apt to engage and fix the attention of a People, whoſe heart was *groſs*; fitted to inſpire them with an awful Reverence; and withdraw their Affections, from the Pomp and Pageantry of Idol Worſhip; which had ſo very ſurpriſingly bewitch'd the world about that time. It was fill'd with operoſe, magnificent Rites, to keep them duly employ'd and attach'd to it; and ſo far mix'd and incorporated with their civil Polity, that the ſame things were Duties of Religion, and Acts of State; and the Service of God, became the conſtant Buſineſs, as well as Entertainment of their Lives; and ſerv'd them inſtead of all other Entertainments [a].

[f] See Mr. *Welſted*'s Scheme of Prov. p. 70, &c. or, Agreement of Cuſtoms between the *Eaſt-Indians* and *Jews*, Art. 3. p. 23.

[a] See *Univerſal Hiſt.* p. 694. and *Welſted*, p. 72, &c. or *Edwards*'s *Survey*, V. 1. p. 242, 255, &c. or *Limborch Amic. Collat.* p. 317. We may add, that the Ceremonial part itſelf might have a moral view, repreſenting ſeveral Duties to them in that emblematical, and Parabolic way, which was well known, and commonly made uſe of in thoſe times. See Inſtances in Dr. *Burnet Boyle*'s *Lect.* p. 542. Fol. Other Rites were inſtituted in *Commemoration* of great and ſignal Events, extraordinary acts of Providence towards their Nation; the keeping up a conſtant Remembrance of which could not but be of great uſe for preſerving the Love and Worſhip of God amongſt them,

Nor was this Inſtitution wholly confined to the *Jews*. The Law itſelf was given to Strangers [b], and thoſe that accompanied them from *Egypt*; the *Covenant* was made with all the *Gentiles*, that ſhould hereafter become Proſelytes to their Religion [c]; and ſufficient care was taken, to communicate it to them; as we ſhall ſee preſently. And though the Children of *Iſrael* were to have no Commerce with the *Seven Nations*; but were commanded to deſtroy them, and poſſeſs themſelves of their Country; on their refuſing to ſubmit to their terms, and rejecting offers of Peace [d]: yet to

awakening their Gratitude, and engaging their dutiful Obedience. *Leland's Div. Auth. of the O. and N.T.* aſſerted againſt the *Moral Philoſopher*, p. 50. Nor were the public *Feaſts*, in which they were all obliged to meet at one place, of leſs uſe to them; by keeping them united together in one Body Politic. See *Le Clerc* on *Exod.* 23. 14.

[b] *Deut.* 29. 11. 31. 12. *Joſh.* 8. 33. 35. *Exod.* 12. 19. 49.

[c] *Deut.* 29. 14, 15. *Neither with you only do I make this Covenant and this Oath; but with him that ſtandeth here with us this day before the Lord, and alſo with him that is not here with us this day.* See *Lev.* 24. 22. and *Jenkin*, V. 1. p. 60-65. or *Worthington's* Eſſay, p. 130.

[d] *Deut.* 20. 10, &c. *Joſh.* 2. 12. and 11. 19, 20. and 16. 10. and 17. 13. See *Univ. Hiſt.* p. 531, 532. Note I. *Edward's* Survey, p. 355, &c. *Patrick* on *Ex.* 23. 32. *Shuckford's Connection*, V. 3. B. 12. p. 433, &c. *Selden de Jur. N.* L. 6. c. 14.

prevent

prevent their imagining themſelves the only Favourites of Heaven, and learning to deſpiſe, and hate the reſt of Mankind; (as they were but too apt to do, and which to a People under their circumſtances was in ſome meaſure unavoidable) they were told, at the ſame time, that it was for the incorrigible wickedneſs of thoſe Nations[e], (who of all others had been favour'd with the greateſt means of information, *viz.* from the Examples of ſo many eminent men placed amongſt them, and from the Judgements of God ſo remarkably ſet before them[f]) that the Lord had driven them out; as he would do *them* alſo, if they followed their ſteps*: that if any of theſe remain'd long unſubdued, they would infallibly prove a ſnare to them†; and that therefore, as well for their own ſecurity, as in execution of the Divine Vengeance, they were obliged to extirpate them; at leaſt the preſent Generation[g]; or to deſtroy their *National Polity*[h]; and at the ſame

[e] *Lev.* 18.24,25. and 20. 23. See *Leland* againſt *Chriſtianity as old*, &c. V.2. p.429, &c.

[f] See *Jenkin*, V.1. p. 56,57. and 77,78.

* *Deut.* 8.19,20. † *Ex.* 34.12. *Joſh.* 23.13.

[g] *Joſh.* 16.10. *Judg.* 1.25. 28.35. 1 *Kings* 9. 20, 21. 2 *Sam.* 11. 12. 2 *Chron.* 8. 7, 8. See *Jenkin*, V.1. p.71,72.

[h] See Dr. *Sykes*'s Connexion of Nat. and Rev. Rel. c. 13. p. 332, &c.

time were ſufficiently warn'd to avoid their Crimes. They were likewiſe often reminded of their own Perverſeneſs, and Ingratitude *; and aſſured that it was not for their own ſakes, that they were thus diſtinguiſh'd; for they had always been a ſtiff-necked, and rebellious People †; but in regard to the Promiſe made to their Forefathers; and on account of the ſuperior Wickedneſs of theſe Nations ‡[a]; that the

* *Deut.* 9. † *ib.* 9. 6, 7, &c. ‡ *ib.* 5.

[a] That this was ſuch as juſtly deſerv'd exemplary puniſhment, from the ſupreme Governour of the World, and that it might with equal Juſtice be inflicted by ſuch perſons as receiv'd an expreſs, clear commiſſion from him for that purpoſe, is ſhewn at large in Mr. *Lowman*'s Diſſertation on the Civil Government of the *Hebrews*, c. 1. p. 13, &c. and c. 12. p. 221, &c. or *S. Browne*, p. 366, &c. Concerning the great Propriety of puniſhing them by the Sword of the *Iſraelites*, rather than any other way; both for the better Admonition of the *Iſraelites* themſelves, and of their Heathen Neighbours; and how much the Credit of the Gods of every Nation depended on the Fate of War, ſee *Jenkin*, V. 1. p. 72. *Lowman*, ib. p. 228, &c. *Univerſ. Hiſt.* p. 893. Note T. *ad fin. Jackſon*'s Remarks on *Chriſtianity as old*, &c. p. 51. many inſtances of this occur as low as *Conſtantine*; to which purpoſe we have a remarkable Speech of *Licinius* in *Euſeb.* de Vit. Conſt. c. 5. To which we may add, that as the People in thoſe times did not in the leaſt diſpute the Reality of each others Deities, no kind of Miracles but ſuch as imply'd ſuperior Power, could induce any of them to quit their own, for other Objects of religious Worſhip. comp. 1 *Kings* 20. 23. - 28. 2 *Kings* 18. 34, &c.

great

great intent of God was to raiſe up, and ſeparate a People, which ſhould manifeſt his Power to the Heathen; and make his Name known throughout the Earth*; which were to be a *Kingdom of Prieſts* †, Preachers of Righteouſneſs, and Publiſhers of true Religion, all over the World: that this deſign had taken place before they were born, and would be carried on, either by their Obedience, or their Diſobedience; who were to be Examples to all others, both of the Goodneſs, and Severity of God ‡. And accordingly, in the remainder of their Hiſtory, both under their *Judges* and *Kings*, we find them frequently rebelling, and as frequently puniſh'd for it; as ſoon as they repent, they are reſtored; when they relapſe, they are again chaſtiſed ‖; all along alternately ſinning and ſuffering; immediate and viſible Judgements attending each Revolt; either Oppreſſion in their own, or Slavery in foreign Countries; till the laſt great Captivity in *Babylon*, ſeems to have quite cured them of their favourite, predominant Vice *Idolatry*; to which they had

* *Ezek.* 36. 22, 23.

† *Ex.* 19. 6.

‡ *Deut.* 30, &c. *Rom.* 11. 22.

‖ *Judg.* 3. 8. 12. 42. 6. 1. 13. 1. 1 *Sam.* 12. 9, 10, &c.

been before ſo unaccountably addicted [a]. But all this while the reſt of the World reap almoſt the ſame Benefit by them, whether they keep their Law and proſper; or diſobey it, and are

[a] *Le Clerc* attempts to give ſome account of this in his Note on 2 *Kings* 21. 11. which well deſerves to be conſidered. 'I can account for it (ſays an uſeful Writer*) 'upon no other conſideration, but that of the exceeding 'great Temptations there are in all Religions, that are a 'mere mixture of *Civil Policy* and *Prieſt-Craft*, dreſs'd 'up with all the Artifices of external Pomp, Splendor and 'Amuſement, and made agreeable to the corrupt and vi'cious Inclinations of Men. Such no doubt was the *Hea'then Worſhip*, to which that of the *Golden Calf* bore too 'near a reſemblance, both in its Original and Progreſs. 'And when we turn our thoughts to thoſe Ages and 'Nations of the World, that are call'd *Chriſtian* [and 'ſuppoſed to be under far happier advantages of Light 'and Knowledge, than ever the *Jewiſh* Church was], 'and obſerve to what extravagances both of Notions and 'Practiſes, the *Romiſh Communion* hath for ſo long a time, 'and by the like means influenc'd the Majority of the 'Nations around, it will I conceive much abate the won'der ariſing from this matter, conſider'd in relation to 'the Church of *Iſrael*.' The parallel inſtance abovemention'd, affords likewiſe a good Illuſtration of the *Degree* of their Corruption. For that this Crime of the *Iſraelites* did not conſiſt in their abſolute Rejection of the true God, but only in joining the Worſhip of other Gods, and taking them into Communion with him, is made plain by another able Writer. 'So ſtrong was this univerſal 'Prejudice of *Intercommunity*, that all the Proviſions of 'the

* *Pyle* Pref. to *Paraph. on the O. T.* Vol. 4.

in diſtreſs. One would naturally ſuppoſe, that they muſt partake of the Improvements of the *Jews* Religion in ſome degree, as well as theſe partook of their Corruptions; and this appears to be the caſe in fact; and as it has been obſerv'd of *Greece*, that when it was ſubdued by the *Romans*, itſelf ſubdued its Conquerors, ſoften'd their ſavage Temper, and refined their Manners; and afterwards, of the *Romans* themſelves, that wherever they conquer'd, they civilized the World: ſo may it with much greater Juſtice be ſaid of the *Jews*, that they improved, and reform'd the Religion of every People, who were either brought under ſubjection to them, or into whoſe hands they fell: who were witneſſes of the Power, and Juſtice of their God,

' the Law could not keep thoſe People from running into ' the Error. For their frequent Defections into Idolatry, ' till after the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, was no other than the ' joining foreign Worſhip to that of the God of *Iſrael.* It ' is a vulgar Error to imagine they conſiſted in renounc- ' ing the Religion deliver'd to them by *Moſes*, as a falſe ' one; they all along held it to be true; but deluded by ' the Prejudice of this *Intercommunity*, they were apt to ' regard the God of *Iſrael*, only as a local, tutelary Dei- ' ty; this we ſhall ſhew at large hereafter.' *Divine Legation*, B. 2. S. 6. p. 277. This he has done effectually in B. 5. S. 2. See alſo *Jurieu* Crit. Hiſt. V. 2. Part 3. c. 9. *Mede's* Apoſtaſy of latter times, c. 10. p. 651. *Le Clerc* on *Acts* 7. 42.

either

either in diſtinguiſhing them by rewards, for their adhering to him; or as remarkably puniſhing them for deſerting him; and who ſeem to be well acquainted with the Intent of theſe his diſpenſations [a]; eſpecially, when they were made the Inſtruments thereof [b].

[a] This may be gather'd from the caſe of the Men of *Jericho* in particular, who were fully inform'd of the ſeveral Miracles work'd in favour of the *Iſraelites*. *Joſh.* 2. 9, 10. and who muſt have had ſufficient warning of God's deſign therein, either from common Fame, or more probably, by expreſs Revelation; for deſpiſing of which they are term'd *diſobedient* by St. *Peter* 1. 3. 20. comp. *Heb.* 11. 31. See *Shuckford*, V. 3. B. 12. p. 403, &c. And that the ſame thing might be done afterwards, in many other Inſtances [as in the following Note] by their own Prophets, who were ſent to the Nations on that very account, is no leſs probable; as may be ſeen in the Notes a little below; which gives a farther anſwer to the *Moral Philoſopher*'s Objection mention'd p. 92. N. a.

[b] Jer. 50. 7. *All that found them have devoured them, and their Adverſaries ſaid we offend not, becauſe they have ſinned againſt the Lord, the habitation of Juſtice, even the Lord, the hope of their Fathers. The Lord thy God* (ſays *Nebuzar-adon* to *Jeremiah*) *hath pronounced this Evil upon this place. Now the Lord hath brought it, and done according as he hath ſaid, becauſe ye have ſinned againſt the Lord, and have not obeyed his Voice; therefore this thing is come upon you.* Jer. 40. 2, 3. *Am I now come up without the Lord againſt this Place to deſtroy it? The Lord ſaid to me, go up againſt this Land to deſtroy it*, ſays *Rab-ſhakeh*. 2 *Kings* 18. 25. *Iſaiah* 36. 10. and to the ſame purpoſe *Pharaoh-Necho* 2 *Chron.* 35. 21. which ſeems to be the moſt probable ſenſe of

Thus by the various Revolutions in their Government, and frequent change of their Condition, they ſpread the Knowledge of their Hiſtory, and Religion far and near; more eſpecially by the total Diſperſion of the Ten Tribes; and the great Captivity of *Judah*, under the *Aſſyrians* and *Babylonians*; when by their cleaving more ſtedfaſtly to God, and refuſing to comply with the Idolatrous Worſhip of the Empire, they were diſtinguiſh'd by many extraordinary Interpoſitions of Providence; and had ſeveral Royal Proclamations, and public Decrees, made in their favour; which bore teſtimony to the ſupreme Power, Wiſdom, and Juſtice of their *God*; as in the ſucceſſive Reigns of *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Nabonadius* or *Belſhazzar*, and *Darius* the *Mede*; as alſo of *Cyrus*, *Cambyſes* or *Abaſuerus*, *Darius Hyſtaſpis*, *Xerxes*, *Abaſuerus* the ſecond, or *Artaxerxes* [c]; many of which Princes found themſelves deſcribed before in the *Jewiſh* Prophecies; ſome of them very expreſsly; one by name. After theſe,

of both theſe places, notwithſtanding Dr. *Prideaux*'s Objections, V. 1. p. 24, and 54. 8th edit. ſee *Le Clerc* on 2 *Kings* 18. 22. and 2. *Chron.* ſupra comp. *Judith* 5. 17, &c.

[c] *Dan.* 3. 28. 4. 1, 2, &c. 6. 25, &c. 2 *Chron.* 36. 23. 1 *Eſdras* 1. 27. 2. 3. 8. 8, &c. *Ezra* 1. 3. 6. 9. 6. 12. 7. 13. *Nehem.* 2. 7, &c. *Eſther* 9. 32. and 10. Conf. *Joſeph* contr. Ap. L. 1. et Ant. L. 11. c. 1. et 5.

Alex-

Alexander comes to *Jeruſalem*, conſults the Prophecies of *Daniel*, and offers Sacrifice to the Moſt High;[b] and many of the *Jews* liſt in his Troops.[c] After his Death, *Ptolemy*, making himſelf Maſter of *Judea*, carries above a hundred thouſand *Jews* into *Egypt*, diſperſes them through every Province; employs the chief of them in his Army, and Garriſons; plants great numbers in *Cyrene*, and *Libya*;[d] and gives many more extraordinary Privileges in *Alexandria*.[e] His Son *Philadelphus* procured a Tranſlation of their Law into *Greek*, the then moſt univerſal Language; which was, as it were, a new Publication of their Religion;[f] and for which, the *Alexandrian Jews* formerly kept a ſolemn Day of Rejoicing:[g] (though afterwards it was turn'd into a Faſt; when they found what great uſe

[b] *Joſephus*, L. 11. c. 8. *Prideaux*, Part. 1. B. 7, p. 487. *Univerſ. Hiſt.* V. 3. p. 345, *&c.* though others queſtion it. See *Moyle*'s Works, V. 2. Lett. 4, and 6.

[c] *Joſeph.* L. 11. c. ult.

[d] *Prid.* Part. 1. B. 8. p. 526. *Joſeph.* Ant. L. 12. c. 1.

[e] *Prid.* ib. p. 541,—2.

[f] When the World having been united under one great Empire, was in the beſt manner prepared to receive it. See *Allix* p. 11. Concerning the end and uſes which this Tranſlation ſerv'd, ſee *Allix* Part 2. p. 161. A more accurate Account of compiling it, may be ſeen in *Prid.* V. 2. p. 34, *&c.* 8 Ed.

[g] *Philo* vit. *Moſ.* L. 3. comp. *Baſnage*, B. 6. c. 5. S. 11.

had

had been made of that Verſion by the *Chriſtians.*) His Succeſſor *Euergetes* offer'd Sacrifices, and gave Thanks to the God of *Iſrael*, for all his Victories; having ſeen the Prophecies of *Daniel* concerning them; and been convinc'd, that he owed them only to that God, whoſe Prophet had ſo fully predicted them. [h] *Ptolemy Philometor* had a Comment on the five Books of *Moſes* dedicated to him, by his Preceptor; [i] and permitted *Onias*, the High Prieſt, to build a Temple in his Kingdom, after the Model of that at *Jeruſalem*; and to perform the ſame Worſhip in it; [k] whereby the Prophecy of *Iſaiah* was perhaps fulfill'd,* that *there ſhould be an Altar unto the Lord in the midſt of the Land of Egypt*; [l] and by this means, his Name became as well known there, as in *Judea* itſelf; that Temple continuing for above three hundred

[h] *Prid.* Part 2. B. 2. p. 82. *Joſeph.* contr. *App.* L. 2.

[i] *Euſeb. Eccleſ. Hiſt.* L. 7. c. ult. *&c. Prideaux*, Part 2. B. 1. pag. 29. *Euſeb.* Præp. Evang. L. 13. cap. 12. *Clem. Alex.* Strom. L. 1. and 5.

[k] *Prid.* B. 1. p. 264.

* *Iſa.* 19. 19.

[l] By this Prophecy, the *Jews* thought themſelves authoriſed in building a Temple in *Egypt*, though it was a Thing otherwiſe forbidden by their Law. *Allix*, p. 163.

and

and forty Years *. When at length *Judea* was reduced to a *Roman* Province, this People, and their Religion, became no leſs known all over that vaſt Empire. That they were very remarkably preſerv'd, and proſper'd under it for ſome time, is particularly noted in its Hiſtory.[m] We find great Privileges granted them by *Julius Cæſar*;[n] and *Auguſtus*, *Tiberius*, *Vitellius*, all

* *Jenkin*, V. 1. p. 92. *Joſephus* ſays 333 Years. *De Bell. Jud.* L. 7. c. 30.

[m] *Dio Caſſius* ſays: Και ἐστι και παρα τοις Ῥωμαιοις το γενος τοῦτο, κολλουθεν μεν πολλακις, αὐξηθεν δε ἐπι πλειστον ὥστε και ἐς παρρησιαν της νομισιως ἐνικησαι. Eſt id genus hominum (Judæorum) apud Romanos etiam: atque tametſi ſæpenumero imminutum fuerit, ita tamen auctum eſt, ut *legum quoque poteſtatem vicerit*. L. 37. p. 41. D. ed. *H. Steph.* The Hiſtorian probably means no more, than that they prevail'd ſo far againſt the *Romans*, as to live by their own Laws, or preſerve the free Exerciſe of their Religion; which they did every where, and which was an Indulgence pretty extraordinary, conſidering their declared Oppoſition to all other Eſtabliſhments; and the general Odium which they incurr'd ſometimes, by abuſing the Favour. Yet it is to be obſerv'd, that the *Jews* never oppoſed the *Pagan* Religion, as the *Chriſtians* did, but pretended that *Moſes* had forbidden them to ſpeak againſt the Gods of other Nations, or to rob their Temples. *Joſephus* talks in this way [contr. *App.* 11. 33.] to pleaſe and pacify the *Gentiles*. The Hiſtorian *Dio*, mention'd before, hated the *Jews*, and knew nothing of their Religion, as appears in many Places of his Book.

[n] *Joſeph.* contr. *App.* 2. Id. Ant. L. 16. c. 10, *&c.*

ſending

ſending Victims to be offer'd at the Temple of *Jeruſalem*.°

And thus did the four great, ſucceſſive Monarchies, ſeverally contribute towards propagating the Knowledge of the true God, in the World; thus, as the laſt of his Prophets had foretold, † *from the Riſing of the Sun even unto the Going down of the ſame, was his Name Great among the Gentiles.* ‡ And though the *Jews* were never able at once to convert a whole Nation ‖ to their Church, and make it the eſtabliſhed Religion of the Country; yet they gain'd every where numerous *Proſelytes* ᵖ to

° *Jenkin* V. 1. p. 86. *Allix*, B. 2. c. 25. The ſame thing had been often done before, particularly by *Antiochus* the Great [*Joſeph.* Antiq. L. 12. c. 3.] and under *Seleucus*, when the *Jews* were in ſuch high Eſteem, that ſovereign Princes courted their Friendſhip, and made magnificent Preſents to the Temple; and *Seleucus* furniſh'd out of his own Treaſury, all the Expences of it. 2 *Maccab.* 3. 3.— So far were they from being always that little, inconſiderable Nation, which ſome repreſent.

† *Mal.* 1. 11.

‡ Comp. *Iſa.* 45. 6.

‖ See Mr. *Jortin*'s Diſc', p. 89.

ᵖ Of this Number, in all Probability, were *Jethro* and his Family, among the *Midianites*. [*Ex.* 18. 11.] *Naaman* and his Servants, among the *Syrians* [2 *Kings* 5. 17.] *Araunah* the *Jebuſite* [2 *Sam.* 24. 23.] *Hiram* King of *Tyre* [1 *Kings* 5. 7. 2 *Chron.* 2. 12.] the Queen of *Sheba*, *Egypt* and *Ethiopia* [1 *Kings* 10. 9. *Joſeph. Antiq.* 8. 2. In *Solomon*'s Time

their Law; and many more to the Belief of One Supreme God, (which was as much as was then required) and thereby prepared the Minds of Men for a more perfect Diſpenſation: [r] and might have done this with better

Time, there were found above an hundred and fifty three thouſand Strangers or Proſelytes in the Land [2 *Chron.* 2. 17.] without reckoning Women and Children, [ib. v. 18.] and in other Lands, very probably, might there be as many, by the miraculous Converſion of *Nebuchadnezzar* [*Dan.* 3. 28, 29. 4. 34, &c.] and the other Princes abovemention'd. [*Eſther* 8. 17.] to which we may add *Joſephus*'s remarkable Account, of the *Adiabenian* Queen and her Son. [*Antiq.* 26. 2.] In our Saviour's Time, we read of devout Men, or *Proſelytes*, of every Nation under Heaven. [*Acts* 2. 5.] Beſides the Eunuch of *Ethiopia*, there were *Parthians* and *Medes*, and *Elamites* (or *Perſians*,) and Dwellers in *Meſopotamia*, *Cappadocia*, *Pontus* and *Aſia*, *Phrygia* and *Pamphylia*, *Egypt* and *Libya*; *Cretes* and *Arabians*, and Strangers of *Rome*. [ibid. 9. 10, 11.] See *Jenkin* V. 1. p. 93. or *Lardner*'s Credib. of G. *Hiſt.* B. 1. c. 3. S. 5.

[r] 'It does not appear, that any of the moſt refined Philoſophers, thoſe Men of admired Knowledge and Genius, ever converted ſo much as a ſingle Perſon or Village, from their Idolatrous Superſtitions; on the contrary, they all meanly ſubmitted and conformed to the Idolatry eſtabliſhed in their reſpective Countries, and exhorted others to do ſo too. Whereas the *Jews* were inſtrumental to turn many from Idolatry, and to ſpread the Knowledge of the true God far and wide, in many Parts of the *Roman* Empire, *Babylonia*, *Perſia*,' &c. '*Leland*'s Anſwer to the *Moral Philoſopher*, p. 57.

Suc-

Succeſs, had they acted more conformably to the Genius of their own Inſtitution; and not treated all others with ſo much Pride, and ill Nature, as often render'd themſelves odious, and contemptible to them; eſpecially in the latter Ages of their Government.[s] Though this perhaps was in ſome meaſure, a natural Conſequence of that ſeemingly *unſociable* Spirit, ſo neceſſary in them to prevent an entire Intercommunion with the Idolatrous Religions round them; and might be greatly aggravated by others, on their at length perſiſting in a ſettled Averſion to thoſe Rites, which they had ſuffer'd ſo much for conforming to.

Beſides, the Jewiſh Prophets were often diſpatch'd to Foreign Countries, to acquaint them with the Counſels of the Moſt High; and to make them *know the Lord.*[t] *Jeremiah* was ordain'd a Prophet unto the Nations;[u] who, together with *Iſaiah*, and *Ezekiel*, propheſied to moſt of them. *Daniel* particularly deſcribes the Fate of the Four Monarchies; as was obſerv'd above. *Amos* proclaims the Judgements of God on *Syria*, *Tyre*, *Edom*, *Moab* and *Ammon*. *Obadiah* is ſent to the *Idumeans*; *Jonah* to the

[s] V. *Juvenal.* S. 14. l. 100—103—4. *Tac.* Hiſt. 5. 5.
[t] *Ezek.* 25. 7. 17, *&c.* paſſim.
[u] 1. 5. Comp. c. 27. and 1 *Eſdras* 1. 28. 47.

People of *Niniveh*, the Metropolis of the *Aſſyrians*; who ſtraightway believe and repent at his Preaching; which ſhews (as is obſerv'd by a learned Writer[x]) that God was kind to them, as well as to the *Jews*; and that they had his Will in ſome Meaſure diſcover'd to them before; otherwiſe they would not have been ſo capable of underſtanding the Divine Meſſage, when it came to them; and of behaving themſelves ſuitably to it.[y] In like manner *Nahum* deſcribes the final Deſtruction of *Niniveh*; and *Zephaniah* proclaims the Divine Vengeance on the neighbouring Countries of the *Philiſtines*, of *Moab*, and *Ammon*; as well as *Ethiopia* and *Aſſyria*.[z] And accordingly, their Prophets are occaſionally ſought, and honour'd by many of the greateſt Princes; who were thereby induced

[x] *Edward*'s Survey, *&c.* p. 296.

[y] V. *Buddei* Parerg. p. 426.

[z] 'One needs only read their Books, to ſee that the 'Prophets not only foretold obſcure Matters, or what 'particularly concern'd their State; but alſo Things of 'a more ſplendid Nature; the Overthrow of Cities, of 'Kingdoms; the Deſtruction of whole Nations, the 'Deſtruction of their own City, with its Reeſtabliſhment. 'Matters which would render their Books very illuſtrious, 'and which would cauſe them to be read, not only by 'the *Jews*, but alſo by the neighbour Nations, the *Am-* 'monites, *Moabites*, *Aſſyrians*, *Perſians*, *Egyptians*,' &c. *Allix* Reflex. B. 2. p. 41.

to

to acknowledge, fear, and reverence the God of Heaven; though they did not entirely conform to his Will. Thus *Eliſha* is applied to by the Kings of *Syria*; * *Jeremiah* protected by the King of *Babylon*; ‡ *Daniel* honour'd, and advanced by the ſucceſſive Rulers of the *Chaldeans*, *Medes*, and *Perſians*; as obſerv'd above.

And thus did this famous People every way ſerve to propagate the Knowledge and Fear of the One true God, in almoſt every Nation; either by their Proſperity, or Adverſity; their Conqueſts, or Captivities; [a] their Separation from the reſt of the Nations, or their Diſperſion among them; both by the Laws that were given them; and by the Prophets which at various times, were rais'd up in the midſt of them; proclaiming the Power and Juſtice of the Univerſal Governour of the World; and foretelling his Diſpoſal both of them, and the neighbouring States; together with the reaſons of it.* Thus were Mankind far from being rejected by their Maker, during this State of *Nonage*; though he had his peculiar Reſidence among

* 2 *Kings* c. 5. and 8.

‡ *Jer.* 39. 11. 40. 1.

[a] *Victi victoribus leges dederunt*, ſays *Seneca* of this People. Aug. de Civ. D. L. 6. c. 11.

* See the Texts in p. 103. Note a.

the *Jews*, and was their viſible Guardian, and Director. The expreſs Terms of his Covenant indeed belong'd to them, (which as it conſiſted in temporal Things, he was often obliged to interpoſe, in order to make good the Performance of it; [b] and which on that very Account could not be a more perfect one;) [c] the real Benefits thereof, the Heavenly *Canaan*, of which the firſt may be conceiv'd as only a Sha-

[b] See Bp. *Sherlock* Diſc. 5. p. 150.

[c] V. *Crellii* Orat. 2. Quare nec *Moſes* nec Philoſophi perfectam virtutem preſcribere potuerint. 'Perfectionem 'ſanctitatis ideo Populo *Hebræo* preſcribere et ad illam 'ſequendam eundem acrioribus ſtimulis incitare *Moſes* 'Dei nomine non potuit, quod felicitatem ac mercedem, 'ob quas pietas colenda eſſet, terrenæ Reipublicæ otio, 'et eorum tantum bonorum affluentia terminaret, quæ 'ad corporis paſtum ſpectant, quorumque uſus hujus vitæ 'circumſcribitur cancellis; ita requirente iſtius populi 'infantia: quin etiam illam Rempublicam in qua pietatis 'ſuæ fructum Gens *Iſraelitica* deberet capere, armis et 'parare et tueri juberet. Unde ſi totam præceptorum '*Moſaicorum* rationem ad iſta tempora accommodatam 'conſideres, animadvertes eam iſti pietatis præmio ap-'prime fuiſſe conſentaneam.' &c. *Crell.* Eth. Chriſt. p. 443, &c. Op. Tom. 4. 'As they were to continue 'ſeparate from others, for the preſervation of the true 'Religion, they ſtood in need of Temporal Promiſes, 'that they might have no Temptation for Temporal 'Gain to fall away into the Gentile Superſtitions. For 'ſince the Heathen ow'd all their Wordly Succeſſes to 'the Worſhip of their Idols and falſe Gods, there was a neceſ-

dow; * extended *to the People of every Nation that feared God, and worked Righteouſneſs*; and he might fix his Reſidence in *Jewry*, as being the midſt of the Nations; [d] in order to diſpenſe the rays of his Light more equally, and advantageouſly among them; to whom his choſen People probably were deſigned to bear a due proportion; as ſome underſtand theſe words of *Deuter.* 32. 8. *He ſet the bounds of the People according to the number of the People of* Iſrael. [a] We are apt to conceive the Deity as partial in his favours to this People; and at the ſame time

'neceſſity, in proportion, that the God of *Iſrael* ſhould 'ſhew himſelf as gracious to his Votaries, as the falſe 'Gods were ſuppoſed to be to theirs; and therefore 'tis 'ſo far from being a Derogation to this Law that it 'abounds ſo much with the promiſes of Temporal Bleſſ-'ings, that it is a particular Inſtance of the Wiſdom of 'it; ſuch Promiſes being not only moſt likely to work 'upon that ſtupid lowminded People, but ſuited alſo to 'their particular Circumſtances and Occaſions, as they 'were to be kept ſeparate from other Nations.' Dr. *T. Burnett. Boyle*'s Lect. p. 543. Fol.

* In what Senſe it may be ſo conceiv'd, ſee Ld. *Barrington*'s Eſſay on the ſeveral Diſpenſations of God to Mankind, p. 46, &c. Comp. *Pearſe* on *Coloſſ.* 2. 9. 17.

[d] *Ezeck.* 5. 5. 38. 5. vid. *Reland Palæſt.* L. 1. c. 10.

[a] See *Jenkin* V. 1. p. 49. That the *Jews* were ſpread over all the World about *Chriſt*'s time, as it is ſaid *Acts* 2. 5. vid. *Joſeph* B. I. c. 16. *Philo.* Legat. ad Caj. id. in Flacc. *Lardner*'s Credib. B. 1. c. 3. or *Baſnage*'s Hiſt. B. 6.

think that they deſerv'd them the leaſt of all People; both which Notions perhaps are entirely groundleſs. Their favours, we have ſeen, were rather favours to the whole World; † and they only Inſtruments, in the hand of God, to hold forth this Light to all around them; whereof other Nations were ſure to reap the benefit, in due time; whether they themſelves ſtood faithful to their truſt, or fell for violating it. Nor perhaps were they worſe than any other Nation would have been, in the like Circumſtances. The *Canaanites*, we know, behaved worſe under all their early advantages, and repeated means of improvement; as obſerved above; * nor could their Deſcendants, the *Carthaginians*, deſerve any better Character: nor did the more polite and learned Nations, *Greek* and *Roman*, afterwards advance above the ſame groſs errors in religious worſhip. [c] Nay whether the *Hebrews* were not in ſome reſpects more particularly fit to have the *Oracles of God* committed to them, has been queried by ſuch as obſerve their former exactneſs in ſettling their Hiſtory; in diſtinguiſhing their Genealogies;

† See Mr. *Taylor*'s Key to the Apoſtolic Writings. Paraphr. on Rom. c. 4. p. 22.

* p. 97.

[c] See this Obſervation explain'd in *Fleury*'s Manners of the *Iſraelites*, c. 21.

and

and preſerving all their Records; their great tenaciouſneſs of Ancient Rites and Cuſtoms; and their extraordinary Zeal in making Proſelytes. [d] And though we may allow them to have been, in general, extreamly ſtupid and perverſe; yet if we look over their Hiſtory with any tolerable degree of Candour, we muſt be convinc'd that they were very different from the account given of them by ſome unfair modern Writers. [e] But the more weak and ſottiſh this People were of themſelves, the better was God's great end anſwer'd, in diſtinguiſhing himſelf, and his Revelations by them; the leſs they did or could do in their own defence, the more illuſtrious was that very extraordinary Providence, which protected them. [f] And the leſs capable they were of inventing the great things contained in their Books, the more apparently did theſe point out another Author; and prove more inconteſtibly that they had ſuch communicated to them from above. However, they were in the hands of God, a certain means of bringing men by degrees to the knowledge of

[d] *Jenkin* V. 1. p. 91. 93. I. A. *Danzii* Cura Hebræorum in conquirendis Proſelytis.

[e] See the *Moral Philoſopher* p. 255, *&c.* V. 1. with *Leland*'s Anſwer. V. 1. p. 207. and *Worthington*'s Eſſay p. 105, 106.

[f] Div. Leg. B. 5. S. 2. p. 362.

the Truth. They were his *Witneſſes*, as He himſelf terms them, * *that he was God.* The firſt production, and original ſtate of Mankind, the Hiſtory of the World and its Government, manifeſted by frequent Interpoſitions, and expreſs Predictions of the moſt remarkable Events; was neceſſary to be known, and well remember'd: Memoirs of this therefore were to be kept ſomewhere; and in ſuch a manner, as to be of uſe to all Ages. And this the *Jews* effected; being diſpers'd among all Nations, and yet ſtill kept a diſtinct People; by which means theſe great Truths were both preſerved pure, and propagated to moſt parts of the World. Their Law was a *Schoolmaſter*, † to teach them the rudiments of Religion, who were to inſtruct and improve others; it was added to the Promiſe, or to the Religion of the *Patriarchs*, *becauſe of Tranſgreſſions*; ‡ to convict them of Guilt, and convince them of the neceſſity of laying hold on thoſe Terms of Grace which were to be offer'd, in due time. Their whole Inſtitution was a State of Diſcipline, and *Bondage under the Elements of this World*; ‖ a ſort of ſervile confinement, and Tutelary regimen; conducting them by preſent, temporal rewards, and earthly

* *Iſaiah* 43. 10. 12. † *Gal* 3. 24.
‡ *ib.* 3, 9. ‖ *ib.* 4. 3.

proſ-

proſpects; affording only a dark, diſtant intimation of better things; and introducing theſe in figurative repreſentations, by Sacrifices, Types and Emblems; till they, as well as the reſt of the World, were got out of their *Minority*; able to walk by a more Perfect Rule; and fit to enter on, and make a proper uſe of their *Inheritance*; till the *Fulneſs of the Time was come:* — which is the next great Period we are to conſider.

From the foregoing account it appears, that God made ſuch ample proviſion for the inſtruction of Mankind, by the various Diſpenſations of his Providence, and Revelations of his Will, at ſundry times and in divers manners, that the miſſion of his Son was not wanted for ſome time; neither would his coming have been ſo ſeaſonable, or ſo fitting, till after thoſe other methods had been tried. It was proper that the *Houſeholder* ſhould firſt ſend his ſeveral Servants to ſee after the ſtate of his *Vineyard*, and reap the fruits of his early care and Culture in their ſeaſons: * that lower Inſtitutions ſhould precede and pave the way for this laſt, higheſt of all.

The *Patriarchs* had ſtanding memorials of God's preſence and protection, as well as fre-

* *Matth.* 21. 33. *Jer.* 7. 25.

quent

quent and familiar Converſe with him; aſſuring them of his Favour, and thereby inviting and alluring them to his Service: The *Law* was given to his peculiar People by *Angels*, * in all the appearances of pomp and terror, to aſtoniſh and awe them into obedience; the *Prophets* were ſent to denounce variety of Judgements againſt their Diſobedience; to threaten them with the ſevereſt Plagues on their Apoſtacy, as well as to promiſe them proportionable Bleſſings upon a return to their Duty; and by both means to prepare them for, and gradually open to them, the proſpect of that great, univerſal Bleſſing, the end and Completion of all his Promiſes, — MESSIAH; in whom were laid up *the ſure mercies of David*; mercies of a much higher nature than any of thoſe which they were then expecting; who ſhould procure for them a far more noble and extenſive Kingdom than they had ever dreamt of; ſhould make them brethren and fellow-citizens with all the world here, and fellow-heirs to a more valuable Inheritance in the World to come. [a] Who not-

* *Acts* 7. 53. *Gal.* 3. 19. *Heb.* 2. 2.

[a] During theſe Circumſtances — God was pleas'd that a Lawgiver ſhould be born among the *Jews* of another nature than he whom they expected, and infinitely more uſeful to them. Inſtead of a temporal King who might have increas'd their Power and Renown, but would not have

withſtanding their blindneſs, and perverſeneſs, and many Tranſgreſſions, ſhould certainly deliver them from all their Adverſities; and finally reſtore them, and all Mankind, to the favour and full Enjoyment of their God.

The Doctrines he taught contain a Syſtem of the moſt agreeable and important Truths, (though not deliver'd in any Syſtematic, [b] artful method, or adapted in any reſpect to vicious Palates) giving us the moſt worthy, amiable notions of the Deity, and affording the ſtrongeſt Motives to love and obey him; the greateſt incitement to reſemble our Bleſſed Saviour himſelf in Goodneſs, Holineſs, and every Virtue of the Heavenly Life.

'have leſſen'd their Ignorance, nor their Vices; God ſent 'them a King worthy of Him, who taught them how 'they ought to live here, to be eternally happy after this 'Life: and ſhew'd them that inſtead of being members 'of a little Common-wealth, and enemies to the reſt of 'Mankind, they ought to look upon the whole World as 'their native Country, and all men as their fellow-citi-'zens: a Thought worthy of thoſe who already profeſs'd 'to believe that all men are equally the Work of God.' *Le Clerc* on the Cauſes of Incredulity, p. 267.

[b] That there is leſs ground to ſuſpect them of Impoſture on this account, and that they are thereby of much greater uſe, See *Leland*'s Anſwer to *Chriſtianity as old*, &c. V. 2. p. 166. *&c.* and p. 245, 246. Add *Crellii* Reſp. ad Quæſt. Tom. 2. p. 322, *&c.*

The

The Benefits he conferr'd were the reſcuing us from the power, and redeeming us from the penalty of Sin; repairing the breach made in our Nature by the firſt *Adam*, and reſtoring to us the loſt Communion with our Maker; not indeed in the ſame open, viſible manner as at firſt; which is neither neceſſary for, nor ſuitable to theſe Ages of the World; but by the more ſecret, ſilent influences of his Holy *Spirit*; which are equally efficacious, [a] if duly attended to, and improved; enabling us to attain unto all that Perfection which he requires, or we are capable of, in the preſent ſtate; and thereby entitling us to ſome higher Degree of Happineſs, and Glory in another. By his own Blood he cancels the original *Covenant*, [b] and purchaſes a new one full of Grace and Mercy; freeing us from the whole of *Adam*'s Curſe, *viz. Death*, or utter *Extinction*; [c] and finally aſſuring us of a complete Victory over both that, and *Hell*, * by the Gift of *eternal Life*, and Happineſs. This is the true import of the Chriſtian Inſtitution; and in this ſenſe it muſt appear to be

[a] See *Wollaſton*, p. 106. or A. Bp. *King*, p. 425. 3 Ed.

[b] In what ſenſe *Covenants* are underſtood was hinted above, p. 57. Not.

[c] See Not. [c] p. 56.

* *Rev.* 20. 14.

in-

indeed a *Goſpel*, or *good Tidings of great joy to* ALL *People:* [d] which therefore ought to be reſerv'd till Mankind were able to comprehend, and duly receive ſo great a Bleſſing; till they were fit to make the proper uſe of ſuch a Scheme of infinite Goodneſs, and Philanthropy. As nothing greater could come after this, and this was to be offered but once for all; (otherwiſe,

[d] In what reſpects Chriſtianity exceeded all former Inſtitutions may be ſeen at large in *Edwards*'s Survey, p. 313,-323. The effects which it will ſome time *certainly* produce are well deſcribed by Mr. *Worthington* in his *Eſſay on Man's Redemption*, c. 11. *&c.* who ſuppoſes that they will be attainable even *in this Life* and has taken a great deal of pains to prove it. The Subſtance of his Scheme is thus laid down. p. 253. — 'My perſwaſion is, that our Redemption 'by Chriſt will, when it hath its perfect Work, be pro-'ductive of all thoſe great and happy effects — That the 'Human Nature ſhall, before the end of the Goſpel Age 'and conſummation of all things, be deliver'd from Sin, 'Sorrow and Sickneſs, and all the other Miſeries and 'Evils of this Life, proceeding from the Fall of our firſt 'Parents, and in the end from Death itſelf; without 'taſting of which it ſhall be tranſlated from an earthly 'Paradiſe, which it ſhall once more enjoy, to an Hea-'venly one, which it ſhall enjoy for ever. And moreover 'that all the Diſorders of Nature in general ſhall be rec-'tified, and that there ſhall be a Redemption of the whole 'Creation to its firſt State, as well as of Man, the Lord 'of it.' How far this differs from the Hypotheſis of *Burnet*, or *Aſgil*'s *Argument*, may be ſeen in the ſame place.

as

as the Apoſtle ſays, † *Chriſt muſt often have ſuffered ſince the foundation of the World*; often in every Country, and as often in vain; his offers of Salvation by their cheapneſs ſlighted, his Sufferings diſregarded) as no farther manifeſtation of God's Will could be made to Man either in terms more full and expreſs, or in a way more kind, and condeſcending; it was fit that all ſuitable proviſions ſhould be made for the reception, and continuance of it in the World; all proper preparations uſed to fix, and aſcertain its Evidence, as well as to explain its Worth, and make men ſenſible of its true Uſe, and Neceſſity. To this purpoſe the *Jews* were to be train'd up to the expectation of it by a ſeries of Prophecies, foretelling the Time, Place, and every Circumſtance of the *Meſſiah*'s Advent; and deſcribing the Nature of his Kingdom: their Law was to continue till it had effectually guarded them from all kinds of Idolatry, and ſecured their dependence on the one ſupreme God; till they had attain'd to ſuch rational notions of his Nature and Providence, as qualify'd them for a more pure and perfect way of worſhipping him; and enabled them to communicate it to the reſt of the World. The *Gentiles* were to have ſufficient experience both of the

† *Heb.* 9. 26.

the Weakneſs of their Underſtanding in ſearching after God, and the infirmity of their Nature, in not acting up to what they might, and did diſcover; ſufficient to make them wiſh and hope for ſome Heavenly Guide, (to inform them how they came into their preſent ſtate of Ignorance and Imperfection, and how, and when they ſhould be able to get out of it,) which in fact the wiſeſt of them did; as particularly appears from two remarkable Inſtances, in *Socrates*'s Diſcourſe upon *Prayer* and *Sacrifice*; [e] and in *Ariſtotle's* declaration juſt before his Death [if the account of it be genuine] concerning the reaſonableneſs of believing that the Gods ſhould come down from Heaven, to inſtruct and relieve Mankind. [f] Thus was the Conſciouſneſs of their Defects requiſite in the Heathens to prepare them for, and diſpoſe them to embrace a Remedy, when it ſhould be offer'd; and the *Jewiſh* Oeconomy was equally

[e] See *Plato*'s ſecond *Alcibiades* near the end. More paſſages to the ſame purpoſe are collected by Dr. *Clarke*, Evidences. Prop. 7. and Dr. *Young* Diſſert. V. 1.

[f] *Auctor de Pomo* [de quo v. *Fabric.* Bibl. Gr. Tom. 2. L. 3. p. 166.] *Cæl Rhod.* Ant. L. 17. 36. [ſee *Bayle*'s *Dict.* Art. *Ariſtotle*, Note Q.] *Stanley* Vit. Philos. Concerning the Tradition of his having convers'd with a *Jew*, ſee *Gen. Dict.* V. 2. p. 267.

re-

requiſite to fit *them* for adminiſtering this Remedy; the one made its value better underſtood, the other render'd its Evidence more inconteſtable, throughout all Ages. No ſtronger Teſtimony than that of Prophecy could be given, to confirm its truth, nor any greater Token of its Uſefulneſs, than that which appear'd in the miſerable State of the Heathen World without it; both highly contributed to procure *Chriſtianity* its due regard, and eſteem in the World; but neither of them could have taken place, had it been from the beginning; as the Objection * ſuppoſes.

We ſee then in general that ſome time muſt have preceded the Publication of the Goſpel; and we ought to conſider, that if it were delay'd a while longer than we can particularly account for, yet as much as that Period may ſeem to have loſt, ſo much we of theſe latter Ages manifeſtly get by the delay; 'tis ſo much nearer to us; and thereby its Light and Evidence more clear at preſent; its Heat and Influence proportionably ſtronger; all which we have occaſion enough for already: and well it is for us that it came ſo late, if all its Evidence decreaſe ſo faſt by length of time, as theſe very ſame Objectors

* p. 50.

jectors would inſinuate.[a] And how do we know but that it might be deliver'd about the middle Age of the World; and by that means be neareſt to the ſeveral Generations, and the moſt juſt proportion kept between the length of time, during which *Chriſt*'s future Advent was to be foretold and expected; and that in which his paſt appearance is to be acknowledg'd, and commemorated? We are haſty, and ſhort-ſighted; our views limited to a few years, and we become impatient at ſeeing any of them paſs over, before the whole Plot is unravel'd; and would have all brought on the Stage at once: but it is far otherwiſe with the great God, to whom a thouſand years are as one day; who has an immenſely large progreſſive Scheme, conſiſting of many underparts, and intermediate ſteps; all placed in their proper Periods, and each riſing upon the paſt; and the whole conducted in that regular, gentle manner, which is beſt ſuited to the moral Government of a World of intelligent free Agents, and moſt becoming a Being of infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs.

[a] *Chriſtianity as old*, c. 12. p. 163. 8vo. from *Craig* of which ſee Dr. *Rotheram*'s Diſſertation. *Edinb.* 1743. Phil. Tranſ. No. 257. *Broughton* againſt *Tindal*, Part. 3. p. 5, &c. Dr. *Randolph*, part 2. p. 34, &c.

But to be more particular. The Period in which our Saviour came into the World may be conceiv'd to be the *Fullneſs of Time*, and fitteſt for ſuch a Diſpenſation, on the following accounts. Firſt, as it appear'd to want it moſt: Secondly, as it was the moſt able to receive and propagate it: and Thirdly, as it was the beſt qualify'd to examine its Evidence, confirm its Truth, and convey it down to future Ages.

Firſt, it wanted it moſt; and that in regard to both its *Morals*, and *Religion*: 1. That Age ſtood in the greateſt need of a Reformation in its Morals; as it appears to have been the moſt wicked, and abandon'd of any upon Record. As to the *Jews*, we are told, that both their Magiſtracy, and Miniſtry were then corrupted to the laſt degree; their Laws againſt the worſt of Villains never executed,* their moſt ſacred Offices, not excepting that of the High Prieſthood, ſet to ſale; the Temple turn'd into a place of Merchandiſe; their Prieſts made of the loweſt of the People, and devoted wholly to Intereſt, and the loweſt kinds of Traffick; the whole Nation ſplit into Sects, and Factions;

* The low State of their *Sanhedrim* about that Time, may be ſeen at large in *Lightfoot* Op. Lat. V. 2. p. 370, 671, &c.

hating

hating and perſecuting, and devouring one another. [a]

In ſhort, the Account which their own Hiſtorian gives of them, not long after this Time, will be ſufficient to determine the Point before us, who concludes it with this Declaration; That if the *Romans* had delay'd taking Vengeance on them, he believes their City muſt either have been ſwallow'd up by an Earthquake, or Deluge, or deſtroy'd by Fire from Heaven, as *Sodom* was; ſince it produced a much more impious Generation. [b] — But this remarkable Wickedneſs of the *Jews* will be conſider'd, in another reſpect, hereafter.— Nor were the *Gentiles* leſs corrupt, or even capable of ever being more ſo; nor does it ſeem poſſible to conceive Human Nature to be ſunk lower in all kinds of Vice and Senſuality, than they were at that Time; (notwithſtanding all

[a] See *Lightfoot*, Op. Lat. V. 2. p. 148. 272, *&c.* *Edward*'s Survey, V. 1. p. 389, *&c.* *Lardner*'s Credibility of the G. Hiſt. B. 1. c. 5. *Benſon*'s Hiſt. of planting the *Chriſtian Rel.* V. 2. p. 234, *&c.* *Le Clerc*. Proleg. ad Hiſt. Eccl. Sect. 1. 2. *Baſnage*, B. 1. c. 5, *&c.* *Whitby*'s Neceſſity, *&c.* of the *Chriſtian Rev.* c. 2.

Nor is this at all ſurpriſing, ſince the reigning Party among them were at that Time *Sadducees*. *Joſeph.* Ant. 18. 2. add *Wall*'s Note on *Acts* 5. 17.

[b] *Joſephus* B. I. L. 16. c. 16.

their Improvements in other reſpects) as may ſufficiently appear from the Deſcription given of them by St. *Paul*, * whoſe Witneſs is true, and moſt abundantly confirm'd by their own Writers. [a]

But Secondly. The World at that time more eſpecially wanted a Reformation in Religion; and was grown weary of all former Inſtitutions. The *Jewiſh* Law had fully anſwer'd its

* *Rom.* 1. 21, *&c.*

[a] *Seneca de Clem.* 1. 23. ſays, that in the Reign of *Claudius*, in five years, more parricides were condemned and puniſhed, than had been known in all the paſt Ages: A Proof of the extreme Degeneracy of thoſe Times. 'Ecce *Romana* Reſpublica, quod non ego primus dico, 'ſed auctores eorum unde hæc mercede didicimus tanto 'ante dixerunt, ante Chriſti adventum, paulatim mutata. 'et ex pulcherrima atque optima, peſſima atque flagitio-'ſiſſima facta eſt. Ecce ante Chriſti adventum poſt de-'letam *Carthaginem*, majorum mores non paulatim ut 'antea, ſed torrentis modo præcipitati; adeo juventus 'luxu atque avaritia corrupta eſt.' *Auguſtin.* de Civ. D. L. 2. c. 19. et Id. ib. c. 21. Conf. *Salluſt.* B. C. *Paterc.* L. 2. c. 1. *Senec. Ep.* 7. et de Ira, L. 2. c. 8, *&c.* cum *Sueton. Tacit. Petr. Arb.* paſſim. 'Si Ethnicorum mores 'paulo ante *Chriſtum* et paullo poſt intueamur, quæ fuit 'doctiſſima ætas, peſſimos et ſceleratiſſimos fuiſſe com-'periemus, ut docent qui eorum temporum hiſtoriam con-'ſcripſerunt. Bella Civilia temporibus *Marii*, et *Sullæ*, 'ſtatus Reipub. *Rom.* perturbatiſſimus, qui proxime ſe-'quutus eſt: bella iterum Civilia *Cæſ.* et *Pomp.* tum 'etiam Triumvir. Principatus ipſe *Aug.* et multo magis

'*Tib.*

end, and almoſt ceaſed of itſelf; the Ceremonial Part of their Oeconomy began rather to be a Yoke of Servitude, and an unneceſſary Burden to them; the Moral was in a great Meaſure loſt in their looſe Caſuiſtry, and vacated by their Traditions.[b] The Senſe of the Prophetic Writings had been darkened, and debaſed by their corrupt Gloſſes; and the Key of true Knowledge at that Time taken away, by thoſe

' *Tib. Calig. Ner.* et *Dom.* ne ulterius pergam, cloacæ ' fuerunt flagitiorum et ſcelerum apud *Romanos*, qui ta- ' men *Græcos* paſſim quaſi ſe deteriores deſcribunt. *Sall.* ' *Cic. Sen. Tacit. Suet.* aliique cum nobis hodie leguntur, ' etiamnum indignationem in improbos illius ævi homi- ' nes nobis movent; ne proferam *Perſ.* et *Juven.* Poetas ' Satiricos, qui forte modum exceſſiſſe, in caſtigandis mo- ' ribus ſui ævi poſſent. *Itaque pravæ religionis effectus* ' *ſiſtere non potuit Philoſophia, et paucorum contra torren-* ' *tem nitentium conatus irriti fuere.*' *Cleric.* Proleg. Eccl. Hiſt. S. 2. c. 1. 20. add *Whitby*'s Neceſſity of the *Chriſt. Revel.* c. 8.

[b] Eorum tum Religio, quantumvis Scripturas regulam ſuam pronunciarent, Traditionibus omnis generis præcipuè nitebatur; quas non tantum Scripturis præferebant, ſed iiſdem omnem Scripturis Authoritatem derogabant. *Marc.* 7. 7—9. Tenuerunt *Dominum cum illis contraxiſſe fœdus juxta legem Traditionis.* Baal Turim in Gen. 1. 3. Tenebant *Scriptam Legem deficere comparatam Legi non ſcriptæ.* Tanch. Fol. 4. *Legemque ſcriptam ob mercedem doceri poſſe, non item non ſcriptam.* Maimon. in Thalm. Torah. Perck. 1. *Lightfoot* Op. Lat. V. 1. p. 517. Vide plura Teſtimonia *ibid.* V. 2. p 31.

very Perſons that ſhould have opened the Scriptures, and imparted it to them. Philoſophy had ſhewn its utmoſt Force in the great Maſters of *Athens*, and *Rome*; and was able to afford juſt Light enough to diſcover its own Errors, and Defects; and to refer them to a better Guide; as we have ſeen above. Its Votaries having been long toſſed to and fro, among the Variety of Syſtems which human Wit had invented, were at laſt left in abſolute Uncertainty; unable to decide amongſt them, and influenc'd by nothing more than ſome dark Hints of ancient Tradition; [c] and that became one of its

[c] This appears to have always been the Caſe in moſt of the beſt Things which they deliver on the moſt important Subjects, as may be eaſily diſcern'd by the abrupt manner in which they commonly retail ſuch Sentiments; by their ſeldom reaſoning on them long conſiſtently; (I ſpeak of their Writers in general) or being able to purſue their natural Conſequences; from whence methinks any indifferent perſon would conclude, that they had never traced ſuch out by their own Reaſon, nor were the original Diſcoverers of them; at leaſt, I could not help concluding ſo from hence; as well as from their frequent citing of *Tradition*, and ſome *ſacred Records* for them; and appealing to what they have *heard* upon ſuch Subjects. I might have ſet down numberleſs Expreſſions, that confirm the Obſervation, though I do not doubt but the ſame thing has been obſerv'd by many others: However, I ſhall point out ſome remarkable Paſſages from *Plato* to this purpoſe. *Philebus.* Οἱ μεν παλαιοι κρεῖττονες ἡμων και ἐγγυτερω

most flourishing Sects which professed to doubt of every Thing: and accordingly, we find the great Ornament of this Sect, *Cicero*, declaring on some of the most important Points, that it

ἐγγυτερω θεων οικουντες ταυτην φημην παρεδωσαν. Id. Epist. 7. Πειθεσθαι δε οὑτως αιει χρη παλαιοις τε και ἱεροις λογοις, οἱ δε μηνυουσιν ἡμιν ἀθανατον ψυχην εἰναι, δικαστας τε ἰσχειν, και τινειν τας μεγιστας τιμωριας, ὁταν τις ἀπαλλαχθη του σωματος. *Gorgias.* Ταυτ' εστιν ω Καλλικλεις, ἁ εγω ἀκηκοως πιστευω ἀληθη εἰναι, και ἐκ τουτων των λογων τοιονδε λογιζομαι συμβαινειν. Ο θανατος κ. τ, λ. *Phædo.* Παλαιος μεν οὐν εστι τις ὁ λογος αὐτος οὑ μεμνημεθα, ὡς εἰσιν ἐνθενδε ἀφικομεναι [αἱ ψυχαι] και παλιν γε δευρο ἀφικνουνται, και γιγνονται εκ των τεθνεωτων. Id. ibid. Ἁ δε και λεγεται μεγιστα ὠφελειν ἡ βλαπτειν τον τελευτησαντα εὐθυς ἐν αρχη της ἐκεισε πορειας. λεγεται δε οὑτως, ὡς ἀρα τελευτησαντα ἑκαστον ὁ ἑκαστου δαιμων ὁσπερ ζωντα εἰληχει οὑτος ἀγειν ἐπιχειρει εἰς δη τινα τοπον, οἱ δει τους συλλεγεντας διαδικασαμενους εἰς ἁδου πορευεσθαι κ. τ. λ. Ibid. Πολλοι δε εἰσι και θαυμαστοι της γης τοποι, και αὐτη ουτε οἱα, οὐτε ὁση ὑπο των περι γης εἰωθοτων λεγειν, ὡς ἐγω ὑπο τινος πεπυσμαι. Και ὁ Σιμμιας, πως ταυτα, ἐφη, λεγεις ω Σωκρατες; περι γαρ τοι της γης και αὐτος πολλα δε ἀκηκοα. κ. τ. λ. *Apol. Socr.* Ει δε αὐ οἱον ἀποδημησαι ἐστιν ὁ θανατος ἐνθενδε εἰς ἀλλον τοπον. και ἀληθη ἐστι τα λεγομενα κ. τ. λ. Ibid. Τατε γαρ ἀλλα εὐδαιμονεστεροι εἰσιν οἱ ἐκει των ἐνθαδε και ἠδη τον λοιπον χρονον ἀθανατοι εἰσι, εἰπερ γε τα λεγομενα ἀληθη ἐστιν. *Phædrus.* Τουτου τοι ἑνεκα χρη, παντας τους λογους ἀνω και κατω μεταστρεφοντα, ἐπισκοπειν εἰ τις πη ῥαων και βραχυτερα φαινεται επ' αὐτην ὁδος. ἱνα μη ματην πολλην ἀπιη και τραχειαν, ἐξον ὁλιγην τε και λειαν. Αλλα εἰ τινα πῃ βοηθειαν ἐχεις, ἐπακηκοως Λυσιου ἡ τινος ἀλλου πειρω λεγειν ἀναμιμνησκομενος. Ib. Ακοην γ' ἐχω λεγειν των προτερων. τοδ' ἀληθες αὐτοι ἱσασιν. Id. in *Timæo.* Εγω φρασω, παλαιον ἀκηκοως λογον, οὐ νεου ἀνδρος. Id. de Rep. 10. fin. Και οὑτος, ὠ Γλαυκων, μυθος εσωθη; και οὐκ ἀπωλετο. Και ἡμας ἀν σωσειεν, ἀν πειθωμεθα αὐτῳ.

was impoſſible to determine on which ſide lay (not the Certainty, for that they did not pretend to diſcover; but) even the greateſt Probability;[a] and concluding that in all ſuch Caſes, 'tis much eaſier for him to ſay what is not his Opinion, than what is.[b] They began then

[a] Harum ſententiarum quæ vera ſit Deus aliquis viderit; quæ veriſimillima magna quæſtio eſt *Tuſc. Q.* L. 1. S. 11. V. *Cleric.* Prolog. ad Hiſt. Eccl. S. 2. c. 6. *de Academicis.*

[b] *De Nat. Deor.* L. 1, c. 32. Utinam tam facile Vera invenire poſſem quam falſa convincere. Id. apud Lactant. L. 2. c. 3. Notwithſtanding all the fine Things which he had ſaid about the *Immortality* of the *Soul*, in which point he ſeems to be moſt ſanguine and poſitive of any, yet in his *Epiſtles* (where he is the moſt likely to ſpeak his real Thoughts) we find him giving it all up, and having recourſe only to the miſerable Comfort of *Inſenſibility*. L. 5. Ep. ult. Ut hoc ſaltem in maximis malis boni conſequamur ut *Mortem*, quam etiam beati contemnere debeamus, propterea quod *nullum ſenſum eſſet habitura*, nunc ſic affecti, non modo contemnere debeamus, ſed etiam optare. L. 6. Ep. 3. Sed hæc conſolatio levis eſt, illa gravior, qua te, uti ſpero, ego certe utor. Nec enim dum ero, angar ulla re, cum omni vacem culpa; et ſi non ero, *ſenſu omni carebo.* id. Ep. 4. Deinde quod mihi ad conſolationem commune tecum eſt, ſi jam vocer ad exitum vitæ, non ab ea Repub. avellar qua carendum eſſe doleam, præſertim *cum id ſine ullo ſenſu futurum ſit.* Id. ib. Sed cum plus in metuendo mali ſit quam in ipſo illo quod timetur, deſino; præſertim cum impendeat in quo non modo Dolor nullus, *verum finis etiam Doloris futurus ſit.* Id. Ep. 21. — Una ratio videtur, quicquid evenerit ferre

to be ſenſible that Human Reaſon was of itſelf a very inſufficient Director; and grew

ferre moderate; præſertim *cum omnium rerum Mors ſit extremum.* More paſſages to the ſame purpoſe are collected and illuſtrated by Mr. *Warburton*, Div. Leg. p. 387, *&c.* 2 Ed. And among the ſeveral Apologies which the ingenious Author of his Life has offer'd for them, this probably will be eſteem'd the moſt natural; that even here, *in a melancholy hour*, *Doubts aud Difficulties* may be ſuppoſed to have *got the aſcendant* over *Cicero*, V. 2. p. 561. 4to. In truth, he ſeems to have been often in the ſtate of mind which he ſo well deſcribes *Tuſc. Q.* L. 1. S. 11. M.—Evolve diligenter ejus [*Platonis*] eum librum, qui eſt de animo: amplius quod deſideres nihil erit. A. Feci mehercule, et quidem ſæpius; ſed neſcio quomodo, dum lego, aſſentior: cum poſui librum, et mecum ipſe de immortalitate animorum cæpi cogitare, aſſenſio omnis illa elabitur. That he had great doubts of a *Providence*, is fully ſhewn by the learned Author of *Ep.* ad *C. Middleton*, p. 74. Not. h. That he both recommended *Suicide* as the beſt refuge in affliction, and had frequent thoughts of putting it in practice, is no leſs clearly proved by the ſame judicious Writer, p. 76, 77, 78. And though he himſelf declares, upon occaſion, that he was with difficulty withheld from it, by the advice of *Atticus*, and the intreaty of his Friends: ibid. yet it appears too plainly, that this was not owing at laſt, either to the ſtrength of his Judgment, or his Reſolution; to any prudential Conſiderations reſpecting the State, himſelf, or his Relations, ſo much as to the ſame notorious want of Courage, which diſabled him from bearing his Misfortunes decently, and which muſt equally deter him from attempting to end them together with his Life. But to do him juſtice, we muſt own that he had many good qualities, and that at laſt he died like a man.

weary

weary[c] of the common Deluſions from pretended Revelation. Oracles, Omens, Portents, were generally exploded; [d] the old Fables of *Elyſian* Fields, and *Pluto*'s Kingdom, were grown ridiculous, and given over to Poets and Painters, as the ſame Author informs us. [e] Another very learned Writer of the ſame time tells us, that

[c] Omnis cognitio multis eſt obſtructa Difficultatibus, eaque eſt et in ipſis rebus obſcuritas, et in judiciis noſtris infirmitas, ut non ſine cauſa et doctiſſimi et antiquiſſimi invenire ſe poſſe quod cuperent diffiſi ſint. *Cic. Acad.* 2. 3. Mihi autem non modo ad ſapientiam cæci videmur, ſed ad ea ipſa quæ aliqua ex parte cerni videantur, hebetes et obtuſi. Id. ap. *Lactant.* L. 3. c. 14. Neſcio quis nos teneat error, et miſerabilis ignoratio veri. Id. ib. More Teſtimonies to the ſame purpoſe may be ſeen in Bp. *Leng*'s *Boyle*'s Lect. S. 12. p. 119, 110. Fol. and Dr. *Campbell*'s *Neceſſity* of Revelation.

[d] *Cicero* de Divin. paſſim. *Weſton*'s Inquiry into the Rejection of the Chriſtian Miracles c. 456.

[e] Tuſc. Queſt. L. 1. S. 10, 11. Quid negotii eſt hæc Poetarum et Pictorum portenta convincere? Quis eſt enim tam excors quem iſta moveant? Comp. Id. Or. pro *A. Cluent.* 61. Niſi forte ineptiis ac *Fabulis* ducimur, ut exiſtimemus illum apud inferos impiorum ſupplicia perferre.——Quæ ſi falſa ſint, id quod omnes intelligunt.—Comp. Id. de Nat. D. L. 2. pr. From hence it ſeems to follow, that *the Continuance of ſuch Abſurdities to this very Age* cannot oblige us to *allow, that they had no kind of general Knowledge, which led them to diſcern theſe in their general Practiſe.* Dr. *Winder* Hiſt. of Knowl. V. 2. pag. 338.

they

they had near three hundred Opinions about the *Chief Good*, and ultimate *End* of Action; [f] that the Objects of their Devotion amounted to thirty thouſand; [g] that there were no leſs than three hundred *Jupiters*, or ſupreme Gods, among them; [h] in ſhort, that they had multiplied Deities to ſuch a degree, and modell'd their Worſhip in ſuch a manner, that he, and others of the wiſer ſort, were aſhamed of them: [i] not to mention that the prevalence of the *Epicurean* Philoſophy had render'd both, in a great meaſure, inſignificant. [k] So great want had they of a thorough Reformation in Matters of Religion.

Secondly. That Age was alſo the fitteſt to receive ſuch a Benefit; as well as to propagate it in the World. At the ſame time that the *Jewiſh* Oeconomy waxed old, and was ready to vaniſh away, it had ſerv'd to build up a better Houſe; had rais'd their Minds above itſelf, and fitted them for a more perfect Inſtitution;

[f] *Varro* ap. *Auguſtin.* de Civ. D. L. 19. c. 1.

[g] *Auguſtin.* de Cecil. Deif. 4. 5, 6. *Jurieu.* Crit. Hiſtor. V. 2. p. 13.

[h] *Tertull.* Apol. c. 14.

[i] See *Jenkin*, V. 1. p. 338. and *Sartorius* de Hypocriſi Gentilium circa Cultum Deorum.

[k] See *Le Clerc*'s Cauſes of Incredulity, p. 266.

and

and when the eye of Reaſon, in the Gentile World, had moſt of all diſcover'd its own Dimneſs, and could do little more than ſhew the Darkneſs that ſurrounded them; it then, in the beſt manner, prepared them to receive, and rejoice in a greater Light. The many fine Lectures which had been at ſeveral times deliver'd to the *Jews*, by thoſe *Tutors*, and *Governours* under whom God had placed them; by *Moſes*, *Joſhua*, *Samuel*, *David*, *Solomon*, and the ſubſequent *Prophets*; though all of them in fact found inſufficient to direct their Conduct; and moſt of them, to a great degree, then defeated and perverted, as is obſerv'd above; yet we muſt allow that, towards the End of this Diſpenſation, they began in general to be better underſtood than formerly; upon the erecting of Synagogues, after the *Babyloniſh* Captivity,[1] they were more frequently read and inculcated; and under their Perſecutions, in the Time of the *Maccabees*, more thoroughly ſtudied, and regarded; and laſtly, by their nu-

[1] Vid. *Buddei* Hiſtor. Eccleſ. V. T. Vol. 2. pag. 976. *Vitringa* de Synagoga, L. 1. par. 2. c. 12. p. 413. or *Patrick* on 2 *Chron.* 36. 15. Who aſſigns this as one chief Cauſe of their keeping ſo clear of Idolatry ever after, when they had neither Prophets, nor Miracles among them. add *Prid.* V. 1. p. 389.

merous

merous Schools, and Academies, which flouriſh'd in the moſt corrupt parts of their Government, [m] Learning of all kinds had ſpred itſelf among them, and got ſo good footing, as to render them the moſt capable of diſcerning theſe Corruptions; and recovering themſelves from the Errors and Abuſes above mention'd; when they were once freely pointed out to them, and oppoſed; ſo that notwithſtanding the prevailing Iniquity, which made theſe, in that reſpect, the worſt of Times, their Minds had yet been ſo far cultivated, as to be able to receive the Promiſed Seed; at leaſt much more ſo, than they had been at any time aſſignable before. * The ſame thing had been done to the Heathen, in a good meaſure, and from the

[m] See *Vitringa* Obſ. Sacr. L. 6. c. 14. S. 8, 9. Some of their own Authors ſay, there were near four hundred Synagogues in *Jeruſalem* itſelf; as many Academies; and the ſame Number of Schools: ſome reckon four hundred and eighty. *Buddei* Eccl. Hiſt. V. 2. part 2. Sect. 7. § 17. p. 966, *&c.* *Lightfoot* Op. V. 2. p. 140, and 197. That they aſſembled in theſe *Synagogues* three times a Week. vid. ibid. p. 280. et *Schoetgen.* Hor. Heb. in Act. Apoſt. 13. 42. comp. *Univerſ. Hiſt.* B. 2. c. 1. p. 26. Not. Q.

* 'Whilſt the Prophets were in being, to defend the 'Law, the people were negligent; but ſince there have 'been no Prophets, Zeal has ſucceeded; which is an ad-'mirable Providence.' *Paſcall.* § 10. 23.

ſame

ſame ſource, by their great Lawgivers, and Philoſophers; who got moſt of their beſt Notions from travelling into *Egypt*, *Chaldea*, and *Phœnicia* themſelves, or from converſing with thoſe who did; ſuch were *Minos*, *Lycurgus*, *Solon*, *Numa*; of whom this has been ſhewn particularly by learned Men: [n] Such was *Zoroaſter* in the Eaſt; by ſome ſuppoſed to have been Servant to *Ezra*, [o] by others to *Daniel*; [p] and ſuch

[n] *Gale*'s Court of the Gent. part. 1. B. 3. cap. 9, &c. *Clem. Alex.* Strom. paſſim. The ſame is acknowledg'd by the *Greeks* themſelves. Vid. *Diod. Sic.* apud Euſeb. Ev. Præp. L. 10. p. 480, &c. Ed. *Morell. Diog. Laert.* Prœm. pr. cum *Caſaub.* et al. in loc. Add *Young*'s Diſſert. V. 1. c. ult.

[o] *Hyde* Rel. V. P. c. 24. p. 314.

[p] *Prid.* Connect. V. 1. pag. 331. *Hyde* Rel. Vet. *Perſ.* p. 314. He is ſuppoſed to have been ſometimes endow'd with the Spirit of Prophecy, like *Balaam*. Id. ibid. c. 31. p. 382, &c. What Ground there is to believe that he clearly foretold the Coming of *Chriſt*, may be ſeen in *Univerſ. Hiſt.* V. 2. p. 218. Another Prophecy, to the ſame purpoſe, occurs in p. 222. Not. R. *Prideaux* and *Moyle* agree in ſuppoſing that there muſt have been two perſons of that name, in order to reconcile the *Greek* and *Perſian* Accounts. [*Moyle*'s Works, V. 2. p. 63. and 75.] Others reckon ſix. vid. Cl. *Buddei* Eccleſ. Hiſt. Tom. 1. p. 349, &c. What Reſemblance there is between his Hiſtory and that of *Moſes*, may be ſeen in *Huet*. Dem. Ev. prop. 4. c. 5. Concerning his Writings, vid. *Fabric.* Biblioth. Gr. L. 1. c. 36. p. 242, &c.

was

was *Pythagoras*, his Diſciple.[q] The ſame end was purſued by *Socrates*, and his Diſciples; who prepared the way for a more perfect Reformation, by labouring to bring men to the Knowledge of one Supreme God, and the ſtudy of natural Religion; by teaching them *Humility*, and giving them Hopes of an Inſtructor from Heaven; as was obſerv'd above. The ſame thing was a doing about the ſame time, by that celebrated *Socrates* of the *Chineſe*, (as he is call'd) *Confucius*.[r] The ſame Deſign was carried on by that remarkable Diſperſion of the *Jews* among all Nations, as obſerv'd likewiſe; by the communication of their Sacred Books; which had been long ago tranſlated into the moſt common Language, and many Copies of which were in their hands, and ready to be examin'd:[s] When at the ſame time they were both qualify'd, and diſpoſed to examine them, by the Increaſe of general Learning, and Philoſophy; which muſt help greatly to improve

[q] *Prid.* V. 1. pag. 213. *Univerſ. Hiſt.* V. 2. pag. 236. Not. Z, &c.

[r] Vid. *Burnet* Arch. Ph. p. 20. He is ſuppoſed to have been acquainted with the *Jewiſh* Religion. See *Young's* Diſſert. V. 1. p. 293.

[s] Vid. *Walton.* Apparat. B. Polyglott. S. 9. Par. 3. or *Allix*, B. 2. c. 25. or *Univerſ. Hiſt.* V. 4. B. 2. c. 1. p. 40.

and

and poliſh them, notwithſtanding all its Imperfections abovemention'd; the very Diſcovery of which Imperfections, was likewiſe no inconſiderable Argument of its Improvement. They had time to digeſt the Precepts, and Inſtructions of their own Sages, as well as to become acquainted with the Hiſtory of the *Jews*. Superſtition of all kinds gradually wore off, and Arts and Sciences ſucceeded; which naturally excite, and enliven the Genius of any People; and open a free Communication with others; and theſe were then in great Perfection; as is too notorious to need particular Proof. Nor can what is here ſaid be thought to be at all inconſiſtent with that remarkable Degeneracy, and Corruption mention'd under the former Head; if we reflect how often, in common Caſes, the ſame Perſons who, as to Abilities and Genius, are the moſt capable of apprehending and applying any Inſtruction, and, in that ſenſe, beſt diſpoſed to receive it; are yet, in another ſenſe, *i. e.* in point of Ingenuity, and Inclination, as little diſpoſed to admit ſome branches of it; (or who in Underſtanding may be arrived at very great Perfection, when their Morals are at a Criſis in the other extreme) on which account they want it ſtill the more; and ſuch a juncture may be a very proper one to adminiſter it,

it, and lay a good foundation for their improvement in both theſe reſpects.

Thus were Mankind in general train'd up, and ripe for a new Diſpenſation; as well inclined to attend to ſomething of that kind, as able in a good meaſure to perceive, and reap the Benefit of it, when it ſhould be offer'd; their Curioſity was rais'd, and their Capacity ſuited to any religious Enquiries; nor was it at *Athens* only, that they ſpent their Time in *telling or hearing ſome new Thing*: Science, and Literature had made conſiderable progreſs weſtward; and every where Men's Minds were enlarg'd, together with their Commerce. And thus all Things conſpired to bring the World toward a State of MATURITY; and at the ſame time, the Circumſtances of it were ſuch as remarkably contributed to ſpread all kinds of Knowledge, in the moſt expeditious, and effectual manner. All this while the *Roman Empire* had been growing up to that vaſt extent which it reach'd under *Auguſtus*; and had united the ſeveral Governments under one Head; and ſettled itſelf in a general Tranquility: it had carried its Language, and Arts, almoſt as far as its Arms; had open'd a Correſpondence, and eſtabliſh'd a Commerce, between all the then known parts of the World; from whence Intelligence was

quickly convey'd to *Rome*, and Orders diſpatch'd from thence [a]. *Judea*, the place where the *Sun of Righteouſneſs* was to ariſe, had juſt been reduced to a *Roman* Province [b], whereby regular accounts were taken of all remarkable Tranſactions in it, by the *Roman* Governours [c]; and Appeals lay from thence to *Cæſar*: and by this means the fame of an extraordinary Teacher of a new Religion would ſoon be publiſh'd, over all the civilized parts of the World, and its Profeſſors be better enabled to advance and defend it; and propagate it more ſucceſsfully, than could have been expected under any other Conſtitution of the World before that Time [d]. If true, it muſt by theſe means ſoon

[a] The Inſtitution of *Poſts* among the *Romans* is generally attributed to *Auguſtus*; though we read of them long before, on ſome occaſions among the *Perſians*. *Herodot.* 8. 98. *Xen. Cyrop.* L. 8. *Eſther*, 3. 13. and 8. 10. v. *Briſſon* de R. P. p. 147.

[b] See *Lardner*'s Credib. of the G. H. B. 1. c. 10. S. 10.

[c] See an Account of their *Acta*, in *Pearſon* on the Creed, Art. 4. fin.

[d] To which we may add the obſervation of Mr. *Weſton*, viz. that by the great Extent and Union of this Empire, when the Head of it once became a Convert to Chriſtianity, that Religion would immediately ſpread through a large part of the World; as was the caſe in fact. Enquiry into the rejection of Chriſtian Miracles, p. 110, &c.

gain

gain ground, and appear to be ſo; if falſe, as ſoon be ſilenc'd, and confuted.

For, Thirdly, this Age was the beſt qualify'd to examine the evidence of ſuch a Revelation; to confirm its truth, and convey it down to Poſterity. It was, in compariſon of thoſe before, a learned, curious, and inquiſitive Age, as we have ſeen; and therefore like to be more cautious, and ſceptical in a thing of this nature; not ſo eaſy to be impoſed upon; or apt to run into every religious Project. There were Men every where ready to confute and expoſe the *Chriſtian* Inſtitution, had it contain'd any thing either falſe, or frivolous; abſurd, or immoral; if it had conſiſted of either Enthuſiaſm, or Impoſture; or a mixture of each. At that time the many Sects and Factions in the World had whetted themſelves by Contention, and were perpetual ſpies upon each other; ſo that no conſiderably new Religion could gain ground among them, without being thoroughly ſifted by the adverſe Parties. The *Phariſees* and *Saducees*, the *Stoics* and *Epicureans*, were ſubtle, and perverſe Diſputers; and all of them eager enough to oppoſe the *Chriſtians*. The world had then alſo ſufficient Knowledge of the Powers of Nature, to be able to judge of *Miracles*; and diſtinguiſh them from any uncommon appearance,

or effect of Art[e]. *Prophecy* had been for ſome

[e] It is not my deſign here to enter into the late Controverſy about the Cauſes, why ſo many Heathens for a long time paid ſo little regard to the *Chriſtian* Miracles, though they are allow'd to have been competent judges of them. I ſhall only obſerve here, that Numbers were in fact convinc'd of their reality, and in a great meaſure converted by them, as appears from the great ſtreſs, which ſome of theſe laid on them afterwards in their defences of Chriſtianity: and as to others, 1. They might allow them to be true, yet on account of the old intercommunity of Deities, and multiplicity of Dæmons, for ſome time draw no conſequence from them, in prejudice to their own way of Worſhip. 2. Multitudes of the like nature reported among themſelves, might make others at a diſtance be look'd on as leſs extraordinary. 3. The Atheiſtick Notions prevalent among ſome who had the beſt opportunity of being fully inform'd about them, might lead them to reject all ſuch on Principle. 4. Their uſual way of attempting to account for theſe from ſuch an unmeaning Cauſe as *Magic*, muſt, in a great Degree, defeat the effects which they would otherwiſe have had upon them. 5. The numberleſs falſe ones of all kinds propagated over the Pagan World, which began then to be ſeen through, and which had juſt brought the whole Syſtem into diſrepute, might induce them to view all others in the ſame light, and not think any of them worth a ſerious examination. Beſide the common Prejudices which oppoſed all the Goſpel Evidences in conjunction, each of theſe Reaſons, no doubt, had its weight in overballancing this powerful one, particularly ſo far as reaſoning was concern'd; eſpecially the laſt. And yet it would be no very difficult thing to ſhew, that they reaſon'd extremely ill upon the point. For as the multitude of fabulous Miracles reported amongſt them could be no warrant

time withdrawn from the *Jews*; which muſt make them at firſt more ſhy, and ſuſpicious of

warrant for their diſbelieving thoſe ancient, original ones, wrought among the *Patriarchs* and *Jews* (of which their own were only ſo many awkward imitations), but rather on the contrary, were a confirmation of their Truth, [ſee *Conſiderations*, p. 84.] ſo they were far from having any ground ſufficient to reject or diſregard ſuch as were undeniably perform'd in their own times, unleſs they had others of equal authority and importance to confront them with; which I apprehend was very far from being the caſe: though ſuch a Series of *lying Wonders* might eaſily produce a very ſtrong Prejudice againſt all other wondrous things, how differently ſoever circumſtanc'd, and hinder them from attending to this difference of Circumſtances (as indeed we find it did with ſeveral), ſince any mixture of trifling, ſpurious impertinent ones, is ever apt to prejudice and detract from the true; how far ſoever this be from any juſtification of the abovemention'd Conduct, which a due Care and juſt Impartiality in moſt of them might have prevented. This is all, I apprehend, that can be fairly deduced from ſuch an Event; and this methinks inſtead of leading us raſhly to receive or to reject all Miracles promiſcuouſly, or hindering us from ever looking into the Foundation and Authority of each, ſhould rather teach us to be very willing at all times to have both of them examin'd, and carefully endeavour to diſtinguiſh theſe two kinds from one another, in order to prevent the like thing happening to ſome even amongſt ourſelves. Among other Unbelievers, Mr. *Chubb* lays hold of this Objection, though he has it but by hearſay. Poſth. Works, V. 2. p. 221, 225.

As to the great Propriety of this Proof, notwithſtanding all thoſe bars to its Reception, ſee Mr. *Weſton*'s Diſſertations, p. 352, &c.

any new Pretences to Inſpiration[f]. *Oracles* began to ceaſe among the *Gentiles*, by being deſpiſed, and generally neglected; *Divination* of all kinds was brought into Contempt: and though they were ſufficiently deſirous of ſome better Light, in Matters of Religion, than what their own Reaſon and Philoſophy afforded them, as was obſerv'd above; yet from the many falſe Lights, which had been already held forth, and which had only ſerv'd to miſlead and bewilder them, they rather began to deſpair of finding any true one. Tired out with wandering through the mazes of Error and Uncertainty, the wiſeſt of them gave up all ſuch pretended Guides; and look'd upon the whole Story of Revelation as a Cheat. Thus

[f] We may add, that the ceaſing of this, as well as of Miracles, for a time, would likewiſe be a means of raiſing greater Surpriſe among the *Jews* upon the revival of both, and of procuring more attention, and regard to the Perſon who ſhould appear really to have the Gift of them again. 'Gifts granted to the Diſciples of our Saviour, 'which none had been partakers of ſince the time of *Ma*'*lachi*; God having ſo order'd it, that the Deſires of the 'Jews might be the more enflamed for the *Meſſiah*'s 'Coming; as alſo that upon his Coming, he might the 'more eaſily be diſcerned.' *Allix.* Reflex. Part 4. p. 272. How far Revelation ceas'd from the time of *Malachi*; and what Reaſons are aſſignable for it, may be ſeen in *Vitringa.* Obſerv. Sac. L. 5. c. 6, 14.

men

men were ſufficiently guarded againſt any new Impoſition, though never ſo well ſupported by Learning, Wit, and Policy. Nor would they ſure be leſs averſe to one that came without all theſe: — to one appearing in ſuch a form, and with ſuch recommendations, as the *Chriſtian* Scheme; — ſo deſtitute of aid from Human Wiſdom, and Subtilty; — ſo ſeemingly below what they had hitherto been entertained with — ſtript of all that Pomp and Ornament which attended the *Jewiſh* Inſtitution; — that Art, and Eloquence which adorn'd each Syſtem of Philoſophy; — conſiſting of a few plain Rules of Life, and theſe ſo ſtrictly pure, and perfect; as equally to ſtrike at the corrupt *Scribe*, and haughty *Philoſopher:* and therefore ſuch as muſt needs be to the one, a *Stumbling Block*, and to the other, *Fooliſhneſs*; — deliver'd for the moſt part occaſionally, without Art, or Method; — in the moſt ſimple, unaffected manner;—by mean, obſcure perſons;—in full oppoſition to all the reigning Paſſions, Prejudices, and Intereſts of the learned and great:— under all theſe, and the like diſadvantages, which are well known to have attended the *Chriſtian* Religion in its Infancy; if at ſuch a Time, and in ſuch Circumſtances, it was able to ſupport itſelf, and make its way in the world;

and ſtill be all an Impoſition, both upon the Senſes, and the Reaſon of Mankind; in what a ſtrange Situation muſt Mankind have been, in both of theſe reſpects! How different from what they have ever been before, or ſince! How will the Men who are ſo apt to ſtumble, and ſtrain at each little Difficulty, which attends the preſent Scheme, in common with all others; be able to get over this great, unparallel'd one, of ſuch an Impoſition [were it one indeed] prevailing ſo far, and in ſuch a manner as this did? Or rather, have they not from hence ſome reaſon to allow of its pretenſions? ſome room to admire with us how ſure muſt its foundation be! how ſtrong the outward Proofs of its Divine Authority! how great its inward force, and efficacy! This to a fair Enquirer, who will weigh the caſe with any tolerable impartiality, ſhould now afford the ſame conviction that it did of old; and ſhew it to be nothing leſs than the *Power of God, and the Wiſdom of God.* Each of theſe Obſtacles to its reception, gives the ſtrongeſt atteſtation to it, when once approved of, and embraced; and all together, muſt, when duly attended to, gain it the higheſt eſteem; and be a ſtanding evidence, both of its Truth and Excellence; a ſufficient anſwer to all Suſpicions that can be rais'd, from

the

the prevalence of any Fable, or Impoſture in any other Age; from what may have been introduced in a manner directly contrary to this; by other kinds of Perſons; and in very different Times; by Craft, Policy, or Perſecution; in days of Bigotry, Blindneſs, and Superſtition. 'Tis an obſervation frequently inſinuated by ſuch as are no Friends to Revelation, that there are certain Seaſons when any thing will paſs upon the World, under the Notion of Religion[a]: which has, no doubt, a good deal of truth in it, with regard to the general belief of things marvellous, and extraordinary: But from all that is gone before, I think it ſufficiently appears, that this Age was by no means ſuch; that it can neither be charg'd with Ignorance, nor Credulity; that it cannot be ſuſpected of any extraordinary Diſpoſition to receive ſuch a Doctrine as that of *Chriſtianity*, and from ſuch hands; were it not manifeſtly true, and of Divine Authority: and that therefore the examination into the Grounds thereof, at its firſt propagation, and the full Conviction which each Party muſt have had, before it would be able to gain admittance with them, might fairly

[a] *Voltaire*'s Letters, L. 7. To the ſame purpoſe (if I miſtake not) are ſome parts in the Life of *Homer* 1 Edit. and ſeveral paſſages in *Bayle*'s Dict. and the *Characteriſticks*.

ſerve

ſerve for all ſucceeding Generations; and muſt be allow'd to add one of the ſtrongeſt confirmations to it.

Laſtly, this Age was the beſt qualify'd to hand it down to Poſterity. As it was an inquiſitive, and diſcerning one, ſo it was no leſs letter'd, and hiſtorical. The *Auguſtan* Age is remarkable to this day for the number of its Writers. There is none better known; ſcarcely any of which ſo full and particular accounts are given. The *Roman* Empire had been juſt ſettled; and the minds of its chief Members turn'd from Arms and Action, to Works of Genius and Speculation; fond of celebrating its Conqueſts, and recording its Glory, they gave themſelves up to the Study of Eloquence, and good Writing. Their Chronology had been lately reform'd, and adjuſted; exact Reviews were taken of the moſt diſtant Provinces; the Number, Names, Employments, Quality, Eſtates, of their Inhabitants, regiſter'd [b]; and all remarkable Acts, and Occurrences, tranſmitted to *Rome*, the Capital of the World. In ſuch a State of affairs, no great Event could lie conceal'd, or be long call'd in queſtion: At ſuch a time therefore was it not proper to introduce this new, ſurpriſing Scene upon the Stage of

[b] See *Lardner*'s Credibility, B. 2. c. 1. S. 2.

the

the World; whereby its Æra muſt be fix'd beyond all future Controverſy? Had *Chriſt* come in an obſcure, or fabulous Age, by this time we might perhaps have doubted, whether ever there was any ſuch Perſon; at leaſt, whether any thing relating to him could be well depended on. It was by no means fit, that a thing of this Conſequence ſhould be done in a Corner, and left to vulgar Report, and uncertain Tradition; to be ſoon dropt again; or blended, and diſguis'd with Fiction, and Romance: This therefore commenc'd in an Age of the World, when the Copiouſneſs, and Certainty of its Hiſtory ſerv'd, both to ſpread it more univerſally, and preſerve it more ſecurely; *when many took in hand to ſet forth in order a Declaration of thoſe things which were moſt ſurely believ'd among them*; whereby we have more ample and authentic Memoirs of Church Hiſtory, than could ever have been expected before that Period[a]; and whereby the Time when, the Place where, and Perſons under whom, the moſt material Occurrences happen'd, were aſcertained

[a] This is to be underſtood with an Exception to the thirty years between *Nero* and *Trajan*, to which time all the common Complaint of Want of Eccleſiaſtical Writers ought, I think, to be limited. The Cauſe of this is aſſign'd by *Vitringa* Obſerv. Sacr. L. 4. c. 7. S. 9. p. 904, &c.

and

and confirm'd by Writers of different Nations and Profeſſions; by *Romans*, *Jews*, and *Greeks*.

Theſe ſeveral Circumſtances conſpire to bring the Miſſion of *Chriſt* very near the Time in which he came. There is one more, which ſeems to fix it preciſely to that; at leaſt will ſhew, that it could not be ſooner, conſiſtently with the common Courſe of Providence, and moral Government of the World; admitting likewiſe the particular Scheme already ſpecify'd, *viz.* of his deſcending from the *Jews*; I mean, the Circumſtance of their then being in Subjection to the *Roman* Government, ſo far as to have the Power of Life and Death, in moſt caſes, taken from them [b].

[b] *John* 18. 31. How far this was ſo, ſee *Lardner*'s Credibility, B. 1. c. 2. S. 5. par. 7. p. 49, &c. 2 Edit. The particular Inſtance of St. *Stephen*'s Murder, which is brought to prove the contrary by the Authors of *Univerſ. Hiſt.* [v. 4. p. 236. Not. R.] does not ſeem ſufficient for that purpoſe, but rather looks like an *Act* of the *Zealots*, though his Trial was begun regularly; [ſee *Baſnage*, B. 5. c. 2. S. 8.] and the Caſe of St. *Paul*, mention'd in the ſame Book [N. O. p. 257.] ſeems to ſhew, not that they pretended to an *executive* Power in his Time, but that even their *Judicial* one was then interrupted, to prevent the like Outrages. This Point ſeems to be pretty exactly ſtated in *Millar*'s Ch. Hiſt. c. 7. p. 536. comp. *Baſnage* ibid. S. 7. One would think their own Judgment of the Thing might be inferr'd from *Hieros.* Sanhedr. fol. 18. col. 1. *Traditio eſt quadraginta annos ante excidium Templi ablatum fuiſſe jus vitæ*

By all that we know of that Generation, we have reaſon to believe that, if they had been at Liberty, they would certainly have cut him off, as ſoon as ever he appear'd to correct their groſs Errors, and to reprove their many Abuſes in Religion; to diſappoint all their fond Hopes of temporal Grandeur, Wealth and Power; and humble their ſpiritual Pride, by reducing them to a Level with all ſuch as feared God, of every Nation under Heaven. And accordingly, when they ſaw that he was not a *Meſſiah* for their Purpoſe[c], we find them immediately

vitæ et mortis. et ib. fol. 242. *Quadraginta annis ante vaſtatum Templum ablata ſunt Judicia capitalia ab* ISRAELE. comp. *Allix.* Judgment of the *Jewiſh* Church, *&c.* p. 49. Though Dr. *Lightfoot* is of a different Opinion, and produces ſeveral Inſtances in Confirmation of it. [op. Lat. v. 2. p. 371.] It muſt be confeſs'd, that the learned Mr. *Biſcoe* [*Boyle*'s Lect. c. 6.] has made it very probable, that the *Jewiſh* Magiſtrates had often, even in thoſe Times, the Power of inflicting capital Puniſhments allowed them; but yet he grants that they were often prevented by the *Roman* Governours; [ib. p. 225.] 'tis plain their State was about that Time in great Confuſion; and it appears, that they durſt not exert ſuch a Power, upon the Occaſion abovementioned; nor in their Circumſtances, could at laſt have compaſſed our Saviour's Death in any regular, judicial Way, without Application to a *Roman* Governour; which comes to pretty near the ſame Thing, with reſpect to the main Part of the preſent Argument.

[c] How ſoon their Rulers perceiv'd this, and what a different Conduct it produced at firſt in them, and that of the

reſolv'd to ſeize, and diſpatch him; as they would undoubtedly have done, if they had had ſufficient Power: but being, in a great meaſure, deprived of it, they were obliged to have recourſe to Stratagem; continually laying wait for ſomething to accuſe him of, to the *Romans*; tempting him, and trying all Methods to draw him into any Act, which might be conſtrued Treaſon, or Diſaffection to their Government: on which account alſo we find him behaving with ſo much Caution, and Reſerve before them; keeping in private, as much as was poſſible, and conſiſtent with the End for which he came [d]; charging his Diſciples not to make him known [e]; preventing his being proclaim'd the *Meſſiah* [f]; and declining any direct Anſwer, when queſtion'd about it [g]; till he had finiſhed the Work of his Miniſtry; and fulfill'd every thing in the Scriptures concerning him [h]. No

the common People toward him, ſee *Lardner*'s Credibility, V. 1. p. 288, &c.

[d] *Luke* 5. 16. *Joh.* 7. 1. 11. 54.

[e] *Matt.* 12. 16.

[f] *Mark* 3. 12. *Luke* 4. 41.

[g] *Joh.* 10. 24. 11. 4, &c.

[h] See *Locke*'s Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity, p. 487, &c. Fol. 3 Edit. [or *Lardner*'s Credibility, B. 1. c. 5. p. 286.] where may be found a full Anſwer to the *Moral Philoſopher*'s Obſervations on this Subject, V. 3. p. 189. Who concludes, as is uſual, with a very falſe Account of the Matter,

former Age of the *Jews* probably was wicked enough, to have withſtood ſo many evident Proofs of his being the true *Meſſiah*, to have rejected him, and been his Betrayers, and Murderers; and thereby to have accompliſhed the Prophecies, and executed the good Purpoſe of God, in ſending his Son to die for all the World: this Generation was ſo thoroughly

Matter, *viz.* that 'our Saviour all along, from firſt to laſt, '[witneſs *Mat.* 26. 64. *Mar.* 14. 62. *Luke* 22. 70. *Joh.* 18. '37.] diſclaim'd the Meſſiahſhip among them,' *i. e.* the *Jews*. Comp. *Whitby* on *Matt.* 9. 30. The ſame Account ſerves alſo to confute the Obſervation made upon theſe Paſſages, by the Author of *Chriſtianity not founded on Argument*; who from thence infers, that our Lord could *have no ſuch meaning as to convince by his Miraculous Works*, p. 48. *no ſuch Intention as to prove his own Truth, and Character, by theſe Inſtances of his Power*, ib. in full Contradiction to thoſe many other Paſſages, where he expreſsly appeals to the ſame *Works*, as direct Proofs of his Divine Commiſſion, *Matt.* 11. 4, 5, 21. *Joh.* 5. 36. 10. 25. 38. 14. 11. 15. 24, &c. See Dr. *Randolph*'s Anſw. p. 169, 170, &c. The ſame is likewiſe a Reply to this Author's Objection againſt the Truth of Chriſtianity, from *Chriſt*'s not opening his Commiſſion before the *Jewiſh* Rulers, [ibid. p. 48, &c.] as far as he has repreſented the Caſe truly: for which ſee Dr. *Benſon*'s Anſw. Part 3. Dial. 3. p. 196, &c. The ſame Obſervation may be apply'd, with no leſs Force, againſt our Saviour's doing the like before the *Roman* Governours, which ſtuck ſo much with *Woolſton*; [*exact Fitneſs*. Pref. *&c.*] to which we may add, that his addreſſing himſelf in form at any time to either of theſe, muſt

in

ſuch *, as to have done it with too much Fury, and Precipitancy; unleſs reſtrain'd by a ſuperior Power: which makes their Subjection to the *Roman* Government, in this reſpect alſo, to conſtitute the FULNESS OF TIME; and affords a Circumſtance particularly requiſite, and ſuitable to the Coming of *Chriſt*.

And though this very remarkable Wickedneſs of the *Jews*, in ſome meaſure, counterballanc'd all their other Qualifications for attending to the *Chriſt* when he came; and debarr'd the Generality of them from the Benefits of his Coming; yet it concurr'd equally to carry on the ſame Deſign of Providence, for the common Good of the World: even the Vice, and Folly of them who were led to reject him, contributed to the Advantage, and Improvement of thoſe who had ſo much Virtue and

in all probability have been turn'd to a great Objection againſt the Truth of his Miſſion in after Ages, whether they had, or had not receiv'd him; the firſt would have been wholly attributed to State Policy; the latter might have been urg'd as implying ſome extraordinary Defect in his Credentials. ſee *Benſon*, ib. p. 216, &c. So that had the whole been conducted in a Way different from what it was, the caſe would, as far as now appears, have been no better for thoſe times in which it was tranſacted; and much worſe for all future ones.

* Vid. *Lightfoot*. Op. Lat. 317. 325, &c.

Wiſdom

Wiſdom left, as to receive him; which great numbers of them did; [a] notwithſtanding the vile Policy of their Rulers: and this ſoon brought on that very thing which they were ſeeking to avoid by it, [b] the Diſſolution of their State; it having now fully anſwered the Ends it was deſign'd for, as a Body Politic; and its Remains ſerving to better purpoſes, in bearing every where ſuch evident Marks of the Divine Diſpleaſure, as could not but be taken notice of, together with the Cauſes of their Puniſhment. And thus did the *Fall* of *Iſrael* become *the Riches of the World*, and Riſe of a new, greater Diſpenſation; communicated to all Nations, and by this means moſt effectually confirm'd in every ſucceeding Generation: [c] of which below.

[a] V. *Jenkin*, V. 2. c. 32. p. 497.

[b] *Joh.* 11. 48.

[c] 'Had the *Jews* been all converted by JESUS 'CHRIST, we ſhould only have had doubtful wit-'neſſes; and had they been quite deſtroy'd, we ſhould 'have had none at all.' *Paſchall*'s Thoughts, p. 121. comp. p. 89. 90. 'Iſtos inimicos meos ipſos qui me occiderunt 'noli tu occidere. Maneat genus *Judæorum*; certe victa 'eſt a *Romanis*, certe deleta civitas eorum, non admit-'tuntur ad civitatem ſuam *Judæi*, et tamen *Judæi* ſunt. '—Manent cum ſigno: nec ſic victi ſunt ut a victoribus 'abſorberentur. Non ſine cauſa. Cain ille eſt qui cum 'fratrem occidiſſet, poſuit in eo Deus ſignum ne quis eum

Thus have we conſider'd ſome of the moſt remarkable Circumſtances, attending the Age of CHRIST's Advent; which when they are taken together, make it appear to be the *Fulneſs of the Time*, and fitteſt for ſuch a Diſpenſation. I have omitted ſome Topics commonly made uſe of in this Argument, ſuch as that of an *Univerſal Peace* at that time; and the great *Expectation* of the *Meſſiah*, among the *Jews*; ſince the

' occideret. Hoc eſt ſignum quod habent *Judæi:* tenent ' omnino reliquias legis ſuae, circumciduntur, ſabbata ' obſervant, paſcha immolant, azyma comedunt. Sunt ' ergo *Judæi*, non ſunt occiſi, neceſſarii ſunt credentibus ' gentibus. Quare hoc? ut demonſtret nobis in inimicis ' noſtris miſericordiam ſuam. — In ramis ſuperbiæ præ- ' ciſis inſerto miſericordiam ſuam demonſtrat oleaſtro. ' Ecce ubi jacent qui ſuperbi erant: ecce ubi inſertus es ' qui tunc jacebas; et tu noli ſuperbire, ne præcidi me- ' rearis. Deus meus ne occideris eos, ne quando oblivi- ' ſcantur legis tuae. Diſperge eos in virtute tua. Jam ' factum eſt. Per omnes gentes diſperſi ſunt *Judæi* teſtes ' iniquitatis ſuae et veritatis noſtræ. Ipſi habent Codices ' de quibus prophetatus eſt Chriſtus, et nos tenemus ' Chriſtum. Et ſi forte aliquando aliquis Paganus dubita- ' verit cum ei dixerimus prophetias de Chriſto, quarum ' evidentiam obſtupeſcit, et admirans putaverit a nobis ' eſſe conſcriptas, de codicibus *Judæorum* probamus quia ' hoc totum ante prædictum eſt. Videte quemadmodum ' de inimicis noſtris alios confundimus inimicos? *Auguſt.* in Pſal. 58. V. 11. Tom. 8. pag. 716. comp. Id. in Pſal. 41.

one

one appears to be falſe,[d] at leaſt 'twas foreign to his Birth;[e] any otherwiſe than as a good Means for conveying the Tidings of it more eaſily, and ſafely through the World; (in which Senſe it was included under the Settlement of the *Roman* Empire; but that is not the Senſe in which it is uſually inſiſted on) the other was not gratify'd in the manner in which they did then expect him, but a quite different one; which therefore, ſo far as it was a wrong one, though it help'd to raiſe their Attention to JESUS CHRIST at firſt, yet might be ſaid to tend as much afterwards to deaden and diſappoint it. We may add, that though the *Jews* had ſufficient ground for expecting ſuch a Perſon, from their Prophetic Writings; and this Expectation of theirs in general be a good Argument againſt them now, to prove in what Senſe their Forefathers did interpret ſome of theſe Writings; yet was this Expectation in itſelf (more eſpecially perverted as it then was) ſo far from being any particular qualification of

[d] See *Maſſon*'s *Jani* Templum reſeratum, with *Buddeus* on the ſame Subject; or *Baſnage* Hiſt. Polit. Eccl. V. 1. p. 114.

That the *Jews* had never leſs Peace among themſelves than at that time, may be ſeen in *Joſephus*, *Philo* or *Univerſ. Hiſt.* V. 4. c. 11. p. 196, &c.

[e] See *Woolſton*'s exact Fitneſs, *&c.* p. 91.

the time, at leaſt any Circumſtance proper to confirm the Truth, and Credibility of his Miſſion, that it might as well be ſuppoſed to have a contrary effect, in giving a handle to Impoſtors; as we find it actually did to two *Thudaſes*, to *Simeon Athronges*, *Judas of Galilee*, *Simon Magus*, *Doſitheus*;[f] and afterwards *Barcochebas*, and many others.[g] Nor have I urg'd the *general Notion* which prevail'd over moſt of the *World*, of ſome *great Prince* that then was to appear; ſince this (were it never ſo conſiſtent with *Chriſt*'s real Character) can only prove that there was ſome Prophecy or other, which might be ſo interpreted as to give Occaſion to that Rumour; and the Objection returns, with equal Force, againſt its being prefixed to that Time by any Prophecy: the Difficulty is ſtill the ſame, Why had it not a more early Date in Prophecy, which might have rais'd a proportionably more early Expectation? —— But this has been already accounted for.

Upon the whole; we may obſerve that from the Beginning of the World, Mankind have

[f] V. *Origin* contra *Celſ.* L. 1. et 6. et *Calmet.* Dict.

[g] V. *Joſeph.* B. I. L. 2. c. 2, &c. A Liſt of them may be ſeen in *Kidder*'s Dem. Part 3. p. 167, &c. Fol. or *Wagenſeil*'s Confutation of R. *Lipman*'s Carm. Memor. p. 233, &c.

always

always had ſufficient Means of being inſtructed in Religion; and that the ſeveral Diſpenſations have all along been ſuited to their reſpective Circumſtances, and Capacities, as far as can be learnt from thoſe very brief Accounts that are left us of their Hiſtory; from which 'tis alſo probable, that if we had more full ones, we ſhould ſee this more clearly.

In the INFANT State of the World Mankind were led, as it were, by the hand in matters of Religion; directed by viſible Appearances, on every occaſion; fed with a preſent Portion of this World's Goods, and cheriſhed with temporal Proſpects. The Doctrines of Religion, and Modes of Worſhip, were few and plain; agreeable to their imperfect Notions of Things; and ſuited to their Simplicity of Manners *; and when theſe were once taught, and inſtituted among ſome principal Heads of Families, they might, through the Longevity of Men in thoſe Days, be eaſily held, and handed down by Tradition. When Mankind had multiplied, and were diſpers'd over all the Face of the Earth; and *traditional Religion* (notwithſtanding the frequent Revivals of it by particular Revelations) began to be corrupted, and defaced; and as ſoon as a better way of preſerving and pro-

* See Part 3.

pagating the Notices of it was diſcover'd,[a] *viz.* by the Invention, or perhaps Revelation, of Letters; [b] God is pleas'd to afford more clear and ample ones; he ſingles out a Perſon particularly eminent for Faith, and Obedience;

[a] See Dr. *Conybeare*'s Def. of Rev. Rel. p. 404, &c.

[b] *Gale* [Court of the Gent. P. 1. B. 1. c. 10. S. 4.] brings many Teſtimonies both from *Heathen* and *Chriſtian* Writers to prove that *Moſes* was the Inventor of Letters. See alſo Gen. Dict. V. 6. p. 417. G. I. *Voſſius* Ariſtarch. 1. 9. and *an Eſſay upon Literature, proving, that the two Tables written by the Finger of God in Mount* Sinai, *was the firſt Writing in the World.* Lond. 1726. From which Author it appears how much Letters muſt have contributed to prevent the increaſe of Idolatry; at leaſt the advancing Men into the Number of Gods, by preſerving a more particular account of all their Actions. comp. *Univerſ. Hiſt.* p. 720. N. T. and *Daubuz* on the Revelation, Prelim. Diſc. p. 2, &c. Which laſt Writer ſhews, that it was as neceſſary then to give the *Iſraelites* Letters, to ſupply the uſe of their Symbols, and take off their inclination to ſymbolical Idolatry; as it was afterwards to communicate the Art of *Printing*, in order to correct a no leſs groſs Idolatry in the *Chriſtian* World, by tranſmitting all uſeful Knowledge much more eaſily, and univerſally, than could have ever been done before by Writing, ib. p. 12. Many Proofs of God's having communicated the Art of Alphabetical Writing firſt to *Moſes*, as well as reaſons for that Conduct, have lately been ſet forth by Mr. *Worthington*, Eſſay, c. 8. But this point ſeems to be brought to the higheſt probability by the learned Dr. *Winder*, in the ſecond Volume of his valuable work lately publiſh'd.

takes

takes him under his immediate Protection, by way of poſitive Covenant; communicates himſelf expreſsly to him, and makes him a means of diſcovering that Knowledge to other Nations; and reforming the Religion of every Country into which he was ſent. The ſame Favours are continued to ſome of his Poſterity, and with the ſame Deſign; they are removed to and fro; and every where miraculouſly preſerved, bleſs'd, and multiplied; are united under a *Theocracy*, and have a *written Law* given them; conſiſting of the moſt perfect Rules of Life that their then State, and Temper, would admit of; and containing a Body of Precepts oppoſite, in moſt parts, to the Superſtitious and Idolatrous Practiſes of the People round them: they are intruſted with a Hiſtory of the original State of the World, and all paſt Diſpenſations of Religion in it; together with Predictions of the future; more eſpecially of that great one, under the *Meſſiah*, who was to deſcend from them; and whom they were taught to expect by numberleſs preparatory Types, [c]

[c] Lord *Barrington* (after Dr. *Sykes*) ſeems to reject the notion of *Types*, and will have the *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation to be only 'ſuch a repreſentation of the Goſpel as would 'ſhew the Analogy after the Goſpel took place, rather 'than prefigure it before-hand.' Eſſay on the ſeveral Diſpenſations, &c. p. 46.

and Figures; all tending to point him out more fully to them; and pave the Way for his Reception. They become a mighty Nation; are diſtinguiſh'd by extraordinary Deliverances, Succeſſes and Victories, under their ſeveral Governours; the Fame of them, and of their God,[d]

But is not this ſomewhat prepoſterous, aſſigning ſuch an uſe for it as was in a great meaſure unneceſſary, when the more noble Inſtitution had in fact taken place, and itſelf being *waxen old and ready to vaniſh away?* And how ſhall we be able to reconcile this with the following account of the ſame Author, p. 69? 'God afterwards erected this Family [of *Abraham*] into an *Earthly Kingdom*, 'ſo conſtituted as to *point out* a better, and in many proper ways to *prepare* Men, and *diſpoſe* Things for the 'Eſtabliſhment of it.' De *Typis* V. *Glaſſ.* Phil. Sacr. L. 2. Pr. 1. Tr. 2. S. 4. et *Salden.* Ot. Theolog. de eorundem uſu et abuſu. L. 2. p. 3. comp. Div. Leg. B. 6. S. 6. *Newton* on the *Apocalypſe*, cap. 2.

[d] 'Here we may juſtly admire the ſingular Providence 'of God, which thus made way for the Propagation of 'Knowledge over all the Earth. David was God's choſen 'Inſtrument for extending the *Hebrew* State to its greateſt 'Dimenſions. And then, at a Time when the Nation 'was in the greateſt Extent of Power and Territory, and 'reached to and verged upon ſo many different Countries; ſo that more Notice would be taken of what paſſed in that potent State; —— then, I ſay, *Solomon* was 'raiſed up, and endued with ſuch extraordinary Talents 'by God himſelf, to be the Inſtrument of this greateſt 'Benefit to Mankind. This Prince's conſpicuous and ſuperlative Wiſdom drew the Attention of the World; 'and their Curioſity led them into the flouriſhing Coun-

'try,

ſpreads far and wide. To keep them duly attach'd to his Worſhip, he raiſes up a Succeſſion of Prophets, who ceaſe not to warn, exhort, and urge them to their Duty; to reprove and correct them for their repeated Breaches of it; to remind them of their Dependence on that God, who had already done ſo great Things for them; and to aſſure them of ſtill greater, upon their Obedience; as alſo to threaten them with the ſevereſt Puniſhments, on their Defection: which always came to paſs accordingly; and were diſpens'd in ſo very viſible, and exemplary a manner; as could not but ſtrike Surprize, and Terror into all the Nations round them; and plainly enough diſcover'd him to be, not only a God of the *Jews*, but the Supreme Governour of the World; and Lord of

'try, where they might, among other entertaining things, 'have an ample Opportunity of gaining a full Knowledge 'of LETTERS, or alphabetical *Writing*. This was diſ-'cover'd by *Divine Revelation* at firſt. But as the *He-'brew* Nation had not been ſignificant enough, to engage 'Men to much Attention to their Arts or Knowledge, 'God in his Providence thought fit to raiſe up theſe two 'great ſucceſſive Princes into ſuch a conſpicuous point 'of Light, to be the means of rendering the Knowledge 'of LETTERS more general, and thereby of humanizing 'and improving all Nations in the moſt uſeful Sciences.' Dr. *Winder*'s Hiſt. of Knowledge, V. 2. p. 59, 60.

Heaven

Heaven and Earth: which was the principal End of all; and to effect which their Prophets are often ſent to foretell the Fate of the neighbouring Kingdoms, and to acquaint them with the Knowledge of the Moſt High. This is the great Deſign, which was ſtill carrying on, and which his own People, though they perverſely oppoſe, and frequently endeavour to croſs it, are yet obliged to execute, whether they will or no; and equally promote it by their Succeſſes, and their Sufferings. They were to be like ſo much Leaven, in the Maſs of Mankind; and when they were once thoroughly prepared themſelves, he diſperſes them among all Nations, to diffuſe the ſame Spirit, and contribute to the Improvement, and Reformation of others; and 'tis obſervable, that the ſame long *Captivity*, which cured moſt of them of their great Proneneſs to Idolatry, ſerv'd alſo to diſtribute them over moſt Parts of the World; and together with them, the Knowledge and Worſhip of the one true God. [a]

[a] It has been obſerv'd, that the *Jews* were removed to *Babylon*, when that Empire was in its moſt flouriſhing ſtate, and moſt frequented by Philoſophers, [*Young*'s Hiſt. Diſſ. V. 1. p. 292.] and Legiſlators; who travel'd thither from all parts, and thereby in a good meaſure became acquainted with the *Jewiſh* Hiſtory; as many of them are ſuppoſed to have been. [ſee the Authors above in Not. n. p. 137.]

When at length the *Jews* had attain'd to ſome tolerable ſenſe of Religion, and were ſo well attach'd to it, and confirm'd in their Hopes of the *Meſſiah*, as to be fit to communicate the ſame to the *Gentiles*; to whom they were by this time ſufficiently known; and theſe alſo, by what they had heard of the *Jewiſh* Prophets, and ſeen of their ſacred Books, together with their own Improvements in Philoſophy, were able to receive, and reliſh a more perfect Inſtitution; when both *Jew*, and *Gentile*, had been prepared to expect a new Revelation; when they began to want it the moſt; and were moſt ſenſible of their Wants; and there-

p. 137.] And 'tis well known, that at the end of this Captivity, the greateſt part of them, and thoſe of the greateſt eminence, ſtaid behind, and ſettled in *Chaldea*, *Aſſyria*, and other eaſtern provinces; notwithſtanding ſeveral Decrees granted by the Kings of *Perſia* for their Return; [*Prid.* part. 1. B. 3. p. 136, *&c. Univerſ. Hiſt.* B. 2. c. 1. p. 5.] from whence 'tis probable, that ſome of their Deſcendants ſpread ſo far as the *Eaſt-Indies*, where their Poſterity continue to this Day; as appears from the Accounts of many modern Travellers. We have a remarkable paſſage to this purpoſe related by Dr. *Bundy*, in the Preface to his Tranſlation of *Lamy*'s *Apparatus Biblicus*, as follows: 'The Rev. Mr. *Long*, lately return'd from '*Fort St. George* in the *Eaſt-Indies*, aſſures me, and gives 'me leave to declare it to the World, from him, that the '*Gentous* (a people in the *Eaſt*, who from their Cuſtoms 'and other circumſtances, are by the moſt judicious be-

'liev'd

fore like to be the moſt diſpoſed to accept, and apply the proper Remedy: and when the State of the World was ſuch as moſt of all favour'd the Communication; and help'd to ſecure the Continuance of it; when the dark, fabulous Ages were well over; and ſucceeded by one remarkably learned, and hiſtorical: when Arts, and Sciences, and Commerce, had extended themſelves, together with the *Roman* Empire, and Language, over moſt Parts of the World; and thereby open'd a Way for any new Diſcovery, and enabled Mankind, in general, with Eaſe and Expedition to ſearch into, and thoroughly examine it; and more particularly,

'liev'd to be the Deſcendants of thoſe of the *Jewiſh* Ten 'Tribes who never return'd from the *Babyloniſh* Captivity) have a Temple at *Chillembrum*, near *Porto Novo*, 'on the Coaſt of *Coromandel*, which they call *Zuliman*'s 'Temple, which they reſort to with the ſame Devotion 'as the *Jews* formerly did to that at *Jeruſalem*; and 'that it is divided into Courts, in the ſame manner as '*Pere Lamy*'s is, and is built much after the ſame plan 'which is there given.' An Account of *Jews* and *Jewiſh* Cuſtoms diſcover'd in *China*, *Bengal*, and *Madagaſcar*, as alſo in *Africa*, and *America* both North and South, may be ſeen in the Authors referr'd to by *Jenkin*, V. 1. c. 2. p. 104, *&c.* and many more in *Fabricius*, Lux. Ev. from c. 32, to 50. or *Baſnage*'s Hiſt. B. 6, and 7. where we have an ample Account of their being ſpread over all the four Quarters of the World.

when

when that Part of the World which was to be the Scene of all this, had juſt been reduc'd to a *Roman* Province, and thereby exact Accounts were taken of its State, and Inhabitants; ſo that the Perſon who was to work this great Reformation in Religion there, could not long be hid from the reſt of the World; when the Government of it had likewiſe been put under ſuch a Form as was extremely ſuitable, and even neceſſary to the due Exerciſe, and full Execution of his Miniſtry: in this Period of the World *Chriſt* came;—nor could he, as far as we can ſee, have come ſo opportunely at any other.

Whoever attentively conſiders theſe ſeveral Circumſtances, though he may not perhaps allow every one of them; yet he will, I believe, find ſomething ſo remarkable in many; eſpecially in that extraordinary Coincidence of ſo many; as to induce him to think, that there might be very good Reaſon for deferring this Diſpenſation to ſo late a Period. And though I am very far from imagining this to be the whole of the Caſe, or ſuppoſing that we can diſcover all the Reaſons of it; yet I truſt as many have been already pointed out, as may juſtify the Divine Conduct in this reſpect: at leaſt,

leaſt, I hope, we may be allow'd to ſay, that there is ſomething in them.

And thus it appears that God has all along acted equally for the Good of Mankind, in Matters of Religion; though in very different manners, according to their different Circumſtances and Capacities; that his ſeveral Diſpenſations have been gradually open'd, ſo as regularly to riſe out of, and improve upon each other; and that the State of Knowledge, and Perfection in the World, has hitherto been perpetually *increaſing*.

The very ſame Method might be ſhewn to be continued under *Chriſtianity* itſelf; if it were not too much bejond the Subject of this Diſcourſe. It was in its *Infancy* in *Chriſt*'s Time; who communicated the Things of it to his Diſciples, by little and little, as they were able to bear them;[a] beginning with the plaineſt, and moſt obvious; laying the foundation, and firſt Principles of the Doctrine, during his Miniſtry, and Converſation with them after his Reſurrection;[b] and leaving the more full Opening of it till the Deſcent of the *Holy*

[a] *Mark* 4. 33. *Joh.* 16. 12.

[b] *Acts* 1. 3. *Luke* 24. 27,—44.

Ghoſt;

Ghoſt;[c] which likewiſe led them gradually into its ſeveral Truths. For ſome Time the Apoſtles themſelves were ignorant of *Chriſt*'s true Office; and the Nature of his Kingdom. They could not conceive that he was to ſuffer, and die for the whole World;[d] they expected nothing but a temporal Prince;[e] and thought that his Kingdom was to be confined to a Remnant of the *Jews*.[f] Even after the Deſcent of the *Holy Ghoſt*, St. *Peter* wants a particular Revelation, to convince him that the Gentiles were likewiſe to be admitted:[g] the Diſciples with him are aſtoniſhed, that on *them* alſo was poured out the Gift of the *Holy Ghoſt*;[h] and others of the Brethren *contend* with him about it;[i] and afterwards prevail upon him to diſſemble it.[k] Many yet inſiſted on the Point of *Circumciſion*;[l] and moſt of them concluded that

[c] As to the Fact, ſee the Bp. of *London*'s 3d Paſt. Let. S. 3. 4, and 6. for the Reaſons of it, ſee Miſc. Sacr. Eſſ. 1. p. 157, *&c.*

[d] *Matth.* 16. 22. *Luke* 18. 31. 34.

[e] *Matth.* 20, 21, *&c.*

[f] *Acts* 1. 6. and c. 10. The Uſe of this may be ſeen in Div. Leg. V. 2. B. 4. S. 6. p. 319, *&c.*

[g] *Acts* 10. 6, *&c.* 11. 5, *&c.*

[h] *Acts* 10. 45.

[i] *Acts* 11. 2.

[k] *Gal.* 2. 11. 13.

[l] *Acts* 15. 1, 5.

Chriſtia-

Chriſtinnity, and the World itſelf, would ſpeedily come to an End.[m]

And though a much larger and more comprehenſive View of the whole Scheme was given, by *Chriſt* himſelf, after his Aſcenſion, to St. *Paul*,[n] that choſen Veſſel; who was endow'd with greater Accompliſhments, and a larger Stock of Learning, and who labour'd more abundantly, than they all;[o] yet perhaps it may be queſtion'd whether he alſo was not ſuffer'd to continue under the ſame Error, or left in ſome Degree of Uncertainty about it, for ſome Time,[p] to which Point the Δυσνοησια in ſeveral

[m] See *Burnet.* de Stat. Mort. et Reſ. c. 7. p. 145. *&c.*

[n] *Gal.* 1. 16, *&c.* See Miſc. Sacr. Eſſ. 2. p. 40, *&c.* and *Locke*'s Synopſ. to his Comment on *Epheſ.*

[o] 1 *Cor.* 15. 10.

[p] Comp. *Rom.* 13. 11. *Locke* ibid. [contr. *Taylor* in loc. pag. 352.] 1 *Cor.* 1. 7. and 15. 51. 2 *Cor.* 5. 2, 3, 4. and 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 15, 16, 17. with *Grotius* and *Wall*'s Note on the laſt place. add *Grot.* Append. ad Comm. de Antichriſto, Tom. 4. p. 475. *Sowth* on Inſpir. p. 255. 2 Edit. or *Benſon*'s Append. to Paraphr. on 1 *Tim.* 5. 23, *&c.* *Whiſton* on *Revel.* Corol. 2. [contr. *Waithy*] Diſc. poſt 2 Ep. *Theſſ.*] But if this notion ſeem too harſh, the thing perhaps may be ſolv'd otherwiſe, upon a ſuppoſition that the time of each man's death is, in reſpect of himſelf, really contiguous to that of his Reſurrection. — A doctrine which not only St. *Paul*, but two other Apoſtles alſo, *James* and *Peter*, ſeem to have taught very expreſsly, and which appears to deſerve a little more attention than is uſually given to it.

of

of his Writings, taken Notice of by St. *Peter*, 2. 3. 16. are with great Probability ſuppoſed to relate.*

In this Reſpect the *Chriſtian* Inſtitution may be ſaid to have been but in its *Childhood*, even under the Apoſtles. We find it for ſome Time mix'd with *Judaiſm*; [q] and ſubject to carnal Ordinances: the Apoſtles of the Circumciſion ſeem not yet to have any diſtinct Knowledge of the general Freedom from the Ceremonial Law; [r] St. *Paul* is forced to conceal his Preaching to the *Gentiles*, for ſeveral Years; [s] a Diſtinction of Days, [t] of Meats and Drinks; [u] and other legal Ceremonies, [w] are obſerv'd, to gratify the *Jewiſh* Converts; and avoid giving Offence to

* Vid. *Mill.* Prolegom. paſs. et *Whitby* in 2 *Pet.* 3. 16.

[q] See *Edward*'s Survey, p. 598, *&c.* 'As to their outward way of living, they conformed themſelves to the reſt of the *Jews*, obſerving all the Ceremonies of the Law, even to the Offering of *Sacrifice.*; which they continued to do as long as the Temple was ſtanding. And this is, what the Fathers called, Giving the Synagogue an honourable Interment.' Aug. Ep. 19. *Fleury*'s Manners of the Chriſtians, p. 31.

[r] *Acts* 21. 26. See *Benſon*'s Hiſt. of the firſt Planting, V. 2. p. 209.

[s] *Gal.* 2. 2. See Pref. to Miſc. Sacr. p. 15. 26, *&c.*

[t] *Acts* 13. 14. 16. 13. *Coloſs.* 2. 16.

[u] *Rom.* 14. 3. 1 *Cor.* 8. 13.

[w] *Acts* 16. 3.

the weaker Brethren; they are obliged to comply with ſuch in the Toleration of many things burdenſome to the Fleſh, and unprofitable as pertaining to the Conſcience; and the Obſervance of ſome is judg'd neceſſary to be enjoin'd, to certain *Proſelytes*, by a public Decree. [x] The many Miracles, and extraordinary *Gifts* of the Spirit, which attended the Church at that Time, were no leſs eminent Signs of its Weakneſs; which ſtood in need of all theſe Interpoſitions; (as one well obſerves) [a] than the frequent Appearance of *Angels* was, under the former Adminiſtrations: Whereas afterwards, in its more confirm'd and ſettled State, theſe *Helps* [b] became unneceſſary; the natural and ordinary Evidence, the regular and ſtated Methods of Inſtruction, being abundantly ſufficient. The ſame Obſervation might be confirm'd from the frequent miſapplication of theſe very Gifts, ſo as to occaſion Tumults, and Confuſion in the

[x] *Acts* 15. 28, 29. See *Benſon*'s Hiſt. of Planting *Chriſtianity*, V. 2. p. 56. where the beſt Account ſeems to be given of that Decree, from the 17th and 18th of *Levit.* See alſo Miſc. Sacr. Eſſ. 4.

[a] *Edward*'s Survey, p. 600, 606, &c. add *Hicks*'s Spirit of Enthuſiaſm exorciſed, p. 27,—30. The particular occaſion there was for each, may be ſeen in Miſc. Sacr. Eſſ. 1. p. 153, &c.

[b] 1 *Cor.* 12. 28.

public

public Aſſembly, (with reverence I ſpeak it) even in the midſt of that plentiful Effuſion of the Spirit;[c] inſomuch that they ſometimes *came together not for the better, but for the worſe.*[d] Even in thoſe days, the *Myſtery of Iniquity* began to work;[e] many Factions, and Schiſms aroſe; many Tares were ſown, together with the good Seed, and often ſprang up with it, and choaked it. No ſooner had *Chriſtianity* got well rid of the Yoke of the *Jewiſh* Law, than it was corrupted with *Jewiſh Fables*,[f] and Traditions. The *Gentile* Converts were ſometime in laying aſide their old Errors, and Superſtitions;[g] and afterwards introduced an impure mixture of their *Philoſophy*;[h] this ſoon produced innumerable Sects, and monſtrous *Hereſies*; which take up the greateſt part of the Hiſtory of thoſe times.[i] Inſtead of attending to the plain, popular ſenſe of Scripture, they

[c] 1 *Cor.* 14. See *Div. Leg.* V. 2. B. 4. S. 6. p. 320.

[d] 1 *Cor.* 11. 17. [e] 2 *Theſſ.* 2. 7.

[f] See *Baſnage*'s Hiſt. of the *Jews*, B. 3. c. 22.

[g] See *Bingham*'s Ant. B. 16. c. 5.

[h] See Bibl. Univerſ. Tom. 10. et *Cleric.* Epiſt. Crit. 4. 148, *&c.* cum *Moſhemii* Comment. de turbata per *Platonicos* Eccleſia. in vers. *Cudworth.* Syſt.

[i] See a Summary Account of it in *Le Clerc.* Epiſt. Crit. 4.

fly to fanciful Allegories; [k] raiſe multitudes of Myſteries; and maintain continual *oppoſition of Science falſly ſo call'd.* For under all their ſhew of Science, not much ſolidity, or real Knowledge; not much true Learning is to be met with; nor indeed had they much room to cultivate it in thoſe times.——And though the whole Scheme of our Redemption was completely delivered, and all its eſſential parts recorded, during the extraordinary Aſſiſtance, and Inſpection of the *Holy Ghoſt*; and in ſome reſpects the primitive *Chriſtians* ſeem to have the advantage of others; as being better acquainted with the Stile in which it was wrote; and ſome Apoſtolical Traditions, which gave light to it: [l]

[k] 'Hunc (ſcil. *Philonem*) haud ita multo poſt culpabili 'affectatione ſequuti ſunt Patres et Scriptores Eccleſi-'aſtici, tam ſuam quam lectorum operam ludentes: ſive 'quod is omnium primus annotata in Sacram Scripturam 'tentaret, ſive potius quod *Philonem* primo in hunc mo-'dum ſcribentem repererint: Certum ſane eſt eum *Chri-'ſtiani:* Scriptoribus diu plurimum arriſiſſe; quorum non-'nulli eum adeo ad amuſſim imitari ambiebant, ut ſacra 'volumina, alioquin in ſe perſpicua, foede obſcurarint, 'obductaque allegoriarum ſuarum fuligine minus ſincera 'præbuerint.' *Lightfoot* Op. Tom. 2. p. 848.

[l] Which yet is but of very little weight, as may be ſeen in *Le Clerc* Ep Crit. 4. p. 146, *&c.* or *Whitby*, Diſſert. de S. Scrip. Interpr. paſſim. 'Sunt equidem qui ſentiunt Pa-'tres, eo quod N. Teſtamenti Scriptoribus propiores eſ-'ſent,

yet it by no means follows, that the true Genius, and Extent of this Revelation muſt be as well underſtood by the generality of them, as it could be by any that came after them. What our Saviour ſaid of *John* the Baptiſt, that *the leaſt in the Kingdom of Heaven was greater than he*; greater in his Knowledge of the Nature, and Conſtitution of that Kingdom; the ſame may be ſaid of common *Chriſtians* in that Period; many of leſs Merit, and lower Abilities, but living in a more enlighten'd Age, might eaſily prove equal, if not ſuperior to them, in what may be call'd the *Theory*, or ſpeculative part, of their Religion; with regard

'ſent, idoneos magis fuiſſe ſenſus Scripturæ Judices, ſive 'Interpretes; quod tamen falſiſſimum eſſe experientia 'duce compertum eſt. Ex trium enim primorum ſeculorum ſcriptoribus haud pauca in hoc opere congeſſimus ab 'omni veritatis ſpecie aliena. Oſtendant nobis Patrum 'Patroni unam Scripturæ Pericopen, quæ alias obſcura 'cum eſſet, ab iis ſit lucem mutuata. Hoc autem admi-'randa Dei providentia contigiſſe exiſtimo, ne ex huma-'no judicio Divinarum Scripturarum authoritas penderet. 'Niſi enim experientiâ ſcientiæ magiſtrâ compertum eſ-'ſet Patres primævos et Apoſtolis propiores, haud minus 'quam cæteri, cæſpitaſſe, pronum eſſet propter inſignem 'eorum Pietatem et dona quorundam ſpiritualia eorum 'veſtigiis inſtitiſſe.' *Whitby* ib. Epil. p. 346. That ſuch *Traditions* were not long preſerv'd by the Church. Id. Pref. Diſc. p. 40, 41.

to which only I would always be underſtood.[11] The plain fundamental Doctrines, and Rules of

[11] What has been here ſaid may be ſuppoſed to contradict an eſtabliſhed Rule of interpreting Scripture, which is laid down by an approved Writer in the following words: viz. '*That we ſhould have an eſpecial regard to the practiſe and uſage of the firſt and pureſt Ages of the Church, and thoſe that were neareſt the times of the Apoſtles.*' The reaſon aſſigned is, 'becauſe the primitive Chriſtians had better advantages of knowing the mind of the Apoſtles and the ſenſe of their writings, meerly by living ſo near the apoſtolic age, than the greateſt induſtry or learning can furniſh us with, that live at this diſtance. And to ſuppoſe that the Chriſtians who lived in thoſe early days would either careleſsly lay aſide, or wilfully deviate from the rules and orders which the Apoſtles gave to the Church by the direction of God's Spirit, is a great reflection upon the Providence of God and his care of the Church, upon the honour of our holy Religion, which, upon this ſuppoſition, could not maintain its firſt conſtitution ſo long as moſt human polities have done, and upon the memory of thoſe glorious Confeſſors and Witneſſes to Chriſtianity, who planted the Goſpel with their preaching, and water'd it with their blood, and on whoſe credit and teſtimony the authority of the Scripture-Canon itſelf does very much depend. So much reaſon is there for our paying a due deference to the judgment and practiſe of the Primitive Church, in doubts relating to the Writings and Inſtitutions of the Apoſtles.' *Lowth*'s Directions, p. 63, 64, 65. This is in ſome meaſure juſt, and when the caſe is fairly ſtated what has been deliver'd, I hope, will not appear ſo contrary to it as is apprehended. I own the Rule and Reaſon holds in ſome degree as well in matters of Belief as Practiſe; but

Life were then no doubt (as they have always been) well known; and theſe they took good

but then I think it ſhould be reſtrain'd to matters which thoſe who had a Divine Authority expreſsly declared and determin'd to be ſuch; and of the latter kind ſuch likewiſe as they have enjoin'd as of perpetual neceſſity, (which may be found perhaps to be much fewer than we uſually imagine) and not extended to every thing which ſuch perſons permitted, or approv'd, or even comply'd with themſelves; ſince ſuch might be very tolerable and expedient, and even neceſſary for the then time and ſtate of Chriſtianity, yet afterwards ceaſing to be ſo, vaniſh of themſelves, or become liable to be dropt, or done away, in other Ages, which would admit and probably might require different Inſtitutions. Many inſtances of this have often been alledg'd by Writers on the controverted Points both of Church-government and Diſcipline, Rites, Canons, *&c.* which need not here be mention'd. Allowing then their full Merit to the glorious Company of Confeſſors, Saints, Martyrs, *&c.* and a precedence in certain reſpects to the moſt primitive times: allowing that they beſt knew the Apoſtles uſages and orders, and moſt faithfully obſerv'd and copy'd them, yet theſe very practiſes and orders too might not be of abſolute neceſſity [becauſe not regiſter'd in their Epiſtles] and conſequently that Knowledge be but of very little conſequence, nor comparable in other reſpects to that which we enjoy: nor will it be any reflection on the *Providence of God*, or *his Care of the Church*, if theſe firſt Conſtitutions ſhould be alter'd, and the grounds of them forgot; nay there would rather be more room for making ſuch a reflection, were we oblig'd to conform now-a-days in all points to the ſtate and uſage of the Church in thoſe times, which ſo very few have proper means of underſtanding; and when

care to act up to; and deſerve this Character, that *they lived much better than they reaſon'd.* [m]

they do thoroughly underſtand them, will ſee how much the different parts of it have varied from each other in ſome points, and of how little weight many others are, wherein they all have for ſome time agreed. Nor can I apprehend but that each Church has ſtill a Right to judge of the Occaſions, the End and Importance of ſuch, and to determine for itſelf accordingly, as to its *Government* and *Ordinances*, notwithſtanding any *Deference due to the Judgment and Practiſe of the Primitive Church*; whereever we are allow'd this Liberty by the Apoſtles and inſpired Perſons, and left under ſuch general directions only as καλα ταξιν and ευσχημονως, 1 *Corinth.* 14. 40. Nay when we are enjoin'd to uſe that Freedom of Judgment in deciding upon theſe, as well as matters of much greater conſequence. *Phil.* 1. 10. 1 *Joh.* 4. 1. *Phil.* 4. 8.

[m] See *Le Clerc*'s Eccl. Hiſt. of 2 firſt Cent. paſſ. and Ep. Crit. et Eccl. Ep. 4. or *Daille* or *Barbyrac* Pref. to *Pufendorf*, and Spirit of Eccleſiaſtics. *Whitby* Diſſert. in Pref. S. 4, 5, &c. et Epilog. Bp. *Taylor*'s Liberty of Prophecying, c. 8. *Ibbot*'s *Boyle*'s Lect. Part. 2. Serm. 4. or *Edward*'s Free Diſc. on Truth and Error, cap. 7. or his *Patrologia* Poſth. Tr. 1. at the end of which is a Catalogue of Authors that have freely cenſur'd the *Fathers*.

Buddeus in his Judgment upon *Le Clerc* [de Theolog. Patriſt. Iſag. L. 2. c. 3. S. 3. p. 489.] ſeems to own that the Learning of the generality of the Fathers is to be rated according to the times in which they lived, and that thoſe were much inferior to our own in this reſpect; which is all that I am here concern'd for. Vid. *Bud.* ib. S. 10. p. 508. add *Dodwell* Diſſ. in *Iren.* Pref. et Diſſ. 1. *Wotton*'s Reflections, c. 29. p. 389, &c. 2 Ed. *Waterland.* Importance, c. 7.

Though

Though perhaps even thus much can only be affirm'd of them in the very primitive times, during the extraordinary aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit; and whilſt the original Evidence was clear, and cogent; and its Impreſſions ſtrong, and lively upon them; while they believ'd that the World was juſt at an end; however like to end ſoon with themſelves, by reaſon of the many Dangers, Difficulties, and Diſtreſſes to which they were daily expoſed: from which extraordinary caſes, we are not to form our Notions of the State of any Inſtitution; as was obſerv'd in the beginning. * Nor are ſuch any Objection to the gradual Progreſs of Religion here ſuppoſed. Neither were the firſt Chriſtians different from other men, as ſoon as theſe extraordinary Hopes, and Terrors ceaſed; [mm] as

* Part. 2. p. 53.

mm Ὡς δ' ὁ ἱερὸς των Αποςολων χορὸς διαφορον εἰληφει τȣ βιȣ τελὸς, παρεληλυθει τε ἡγενεα ἐκεινη των αὐταις ἀκοαις της ἐν θεȣ σοφιας, ἐπακουσαι κατηξιωμενων, τηνικαυτα της ἀθεȣ πλανης την ἀρχην ἐλαμβανεν ἡ συςασις, δια της των ἑτεροδιδασκαλων ἀπατης, οἱ και ἁτε μηδενὸς ἐτι των Αποςολων λειπομενȣ, γυμνη λοιπον ἠδη τῃ κεφαλῃ, τῳ της ἀληθειας κηρυγματι την ψευδωνυμον γνωσιν ἀντικηρύττειν ἐπεχειρȣν. Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccleſ. L. 3. c. 26.— ' Reformations in Religion will ſometimes laſt long ' with regard to ſpeculative Doctrines; But with ' reſpect to practical Morality, they ſoon attain to ' perfection and their full growth; and this is ſucceeded by

ſoon as they were at eaſe in the World; and left to the common courſe of it; and once became involv'd in all its Faſhions, Forms, and Intereſts: having all along *this Treaſure in earthen Veſſels*, that the *Excellency of the Power might be of God and not of them.*[n]

' by a ſudden Depravation of manners, and a ſtate of ſo ' much corruption as would require a new Reformation. ' The ſtrict Morals or Behaviour of the primitive Chri- ' ſtians; their Sobriety, Chaſtity, Humility, *&c.* ſhone ' in their greateſt Splendour during the Lives of the ' Apoſtles; but degenerated ſo much daily from the pe- ' riod in queſtion, that there was no difference in the ' fourth Century, between the Manners and Conduct of ' the Chriſtians and thoſe of other People.' *Bayle* Gen. Dict. V. 7. comp. *Moyle*'s Works, V. 2. pag. 204, *&c.* with *Vitringa*'s Diſſertation on the State of the Church from *Nero*'s time till *Trajan.* Obſerv. Sac. L. 4. c. 7, 8.

[n] ' It is with Religion, as it is with Arts and Sciences, ' the firſt Eſſays are ſeldom perfect; they arrive not to ' their height at firſt, they require a gradual Improve- ' ment. And ſo it is here: the primitive *Chriſtians* were ' not grown up to that Perfection of Knowledge and ' Underſtanding which was deſign'd by the Author of our ' Religion. *Chriſtianity* was in its Infancy, at moſt in its ' Childhood, when theſe Men wrote; and therefore it is ' no wonder that they *ſpake as Children*, that they *under- ' ſtood as Children*, that they *thought as Children.* This ' was according to the Oeconomy they were then under. ' And beſides, they had not time and leiſure to ſearch in- ' to the *Chriſtian* Doctrines, nor had they laid in a ſuffi- ' cient ſtock and fund for that purpoſe; they being but ' newly adopted into the *Chriſtian* Church: yet they were

When *Chriſtianity* comes to be eſtabliſh'd in the *Roman Empire*, it partakes of its Pomp and Pageantry; and ſoon admits the Pagan Ceremonies.[nn] We find it immediately ſplit into new

'were willing to appear in its behalf, to defend it as well 'as they could, which was accepted by Heaven.' *Edward*'s Patrologia, pag. 57. 'Let me not be cenſur'd 'though I ſhould be ſo bold as to ſay, that we ſhould 'have underſtood the Scriptures much better, if we had 'not had the Writings of the Fathers; for they have ob'ſcured and depraved them by their different and con'trary Comments; They have raiſed Controverſies, 'they have taught Men to quarrel and diſpute about the 'Senſe of many Texts, which otherwiſe are plain and 'obvious, and about ſeveral matters of practice, which 'are evident enough in themſelves, ſome of which are ſu'perſtious, *&c.* ib. p. 135.

[nn] See *Middleton*'s Letter from *Rome*, 4th Ed. 'Imperio 'ad fidem adducto, ſed et Imperii pompa Eccleſiam in'ficiente: Ethnicis ad Chriſtum converſis, ſed et Chri'ſti religione ad Ethnicæ formam depravata, *&c.* *Turetin.* de variis Chr. Rel. Fatis. Orat. Acad. Comp. *Newt.* on Dan. c. 14. 'I could here alſo take notice, how the 'Writings of the Fathers do generally juſtify thoſe Rites, 'Uſages and Ceremonies, which were preparatives to 'Popery. For my part, I have been aſhamed to ſee how 'ſome Men ſweat to anſwer ſeveral places in the ancient 'Fathers works which the *Papiſts* alledge in defence of 'their Ceremonies and ſuperſtitious Obſervances. Why 'do *Proteſtants* ſtrive to excuſe the *Fathers* in this, and 'to palliate their Writings? This is not the thing that is 'to be done; but rather let them confeſs plainly, that 'even thoſe early *Fathers* were in ſome meaſure infected?' Id. Free Diſc. on Tr. and Err. p. 234.

Here-

Hereſies, and Schiſms; torn with ambitious Conteſts and Struggles for Power: [o] perplexing Doubts, and Difficulties rais'd in points of Doctrine; ſubtle Diſtinctions, and nice Refinements made in its Precepts; and both often confounded in many an idle Controverſy: [p] till at length almoſt all the whole Church of *Chriſt* ſeems to be overwhelm'd with *Popery*, and *Mahometaniſm*; for which indeed it was too fully ripe. [q] Though perhaps the latter of theſe two (notwithſtanding the mixture of Impoſture in it) may appear to have been, in the main, a very conſiderable Reformation. [r] [concerning the former, ſee N. [z] below.]

[o] V. *Ammian.* Mar. L. 15. et 27. *Socr.* Eccl. H. L. 1. c. 22. 23.

[p] See *Barbyrac* Præf. to Puf. S. 19. *Ut in illis temporibus*, ſays *Eraſmus* very juſtly, *ingenioſa res fuit eſſe Chriſtianum.* add. *Euſeb.* de Vit. *Conſtant.* L. 2. c. 61. et *Ammian.* M. L. 21. fin.

[q] See *Sale*'s Prelim. Diſc. to the *Koran*, Sect. 2. add *Grot.* de *Ver. R. C.* L. 6. c. 1.

[r] All Authors agree that what gave *Mahomet* the greateſt room to advance his new Religion, was the diſtracted, ignorant, corrupt ſtate of the Eaſtern Church at that time; the miſerable Contentions, and moſt horrid Perſecutions, on every Religious Pretence; the diſſoluteneſs of all Sects and Parties: and 'tis evident that he contributed not only to reform the Morals of a great part of the World, but likewiſe reduced them from Polytheiſm and groſs Idolatry, to the Belief and Worſhip of one God; which

But this is a Subject too diſagreeable to dwell upon; nor am I inclined to aggravate the Imperfections of paſt Ages. All that I would obſerve, is what appears from the moſt tranſient view of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, namely, that

which was the principal Doctrine he ſet out with at firſt, and gain'd great reputation by; and which he made the ground of his pretended Miſſion. His Syſtem contains a great deal of pure *Chriſtianity*; it enforces the Virtues of Charity, Temperance, Juſtice and Fidelity, in the ſtrongeſt manner; it prohibits Extortion, and all kinds of Cruelty, even to Brutes; and binds its Votaries to the ſtricteſt Order, Regularity, and Devotion. Several Sects of them believe in *Chriſt*. [v. *D. Millius* de Rel. *Moham.* Diſſ. 10. p. 344, *&c.* *Reland* de R. M. p. 25, *&c.* and Sir *P. Ricaut's* Hiſt. B. 2. c. 11, *&c.* or *Millar*, p. 230.] and entertain as worthy Notions of him to the full as ſome of the *Papiſts* do. [ſee *L'Alcoran des Cordeliers*; and *Bayle*, Gen. Dict. p. 326. B.] One may ſee to what height the *Romiſh* Corruptions were grown in *Mahomet's* time, by his reproaching the *Chriſtians* with their aſſociating to God their Doctors and Monks; [*Alcoran*, 9. 31.] and by his ſurprizing miſtake of the Virgin *Mary*, for the third perſon in the *Trinity*: [ſee *Reland's* 4 Treatiſes on *Mahom.* p. 174, *&c.* or *Sale's* Prelim. Diſc. p. 35. and his *Koran*, c. 5. p. 98. How this came about may be ſeen in D. *Millii* Diſſ. de *Mohammediſmo* ante *Mohammedem*, p. 346, 347.] and what havock thoſe moſt lamentable Controverſies on this Subject made, appears from the Confeſſion of a learned Writer, who tells us, that obliged him to drop his deſign of giving us the Hiſtory of theſe Churches. Pref. to *Prid.* Life of *Mahomet*.

the

the riſe, and progreſs of *Chriſtianity* has, in the main, been ſimilar to that of all other Diſpenſations; that both the Name of *Chriſt*, and the Nature of his Religion, were diſcover'd; or, as we may ſee, both the *external*, and internal Propagation of *Chriſtianity*, was carried on in the ſame gradual manner.

As to the firſt. The *Jews* who had before been made uſe of to ſpread the Knowledge of the true God, and his Providence, and prepare Men for a more noble Inſtitution, by their frequent Diſperſions all over the Eaſt; are here much more ſo, (when they were much better qualify'd for it, and leſs liable than ever to be corrupted by the Heathen, among whom ſome of them were ſo long to converſe[s]) by their

[s] See *Le Clerc*'s Cauſes of Incredulity, p. 264, &c. In fact none of them that we know of, however bad they were and are in other reſpects, have fallen from their own God, to the Idolatrous Worſhip of their Neighbours any where, during this their moſt miſerable Diſperſion; their ſeeming ſo long to be utterly rejected by him; a tenth part of which ſuffering would have totally deſtroy'd the very Name of them in any former times. This muſt be thought a little remarkable by every one who thinks at all about it. Nor has their caſe been leſs extraordinary in Chriſtian Countries, where they have never been permitted to reſt long in any Kingdom; where frequently, in every Age, mens eyes are turn'd upon them by ſome new general Perſecution; and yet notwithſtanding all

Diſperſion over the whole World, at the Deſtruction of their Temple, and Government, by *Titus*, and under the following Emperors; eſpecially *Adrian*; [t] and thereby every where publiſh, and prove the Truth of their own, as

all this, they are univerſally believ'd to be more numerous in the whole at preſent, than they have ever been in their moſt flouriſhing eſtate, in their own Land.

[t] He ſold them at Fairs for the ſame price as Horſes, [*Hier.* in *Jer.* p. 342.] and would not ſuffer any of them ſo much as to ſet foot in, or come in view of, *Jeruſalem*, ſay ſome [*Aug.* Civ. D. L. 16. c. 21. *Hil.* in *Pſ.* 48.] or of any part of *Judea*, according to others. [*Hier.* in *Dan.* 595. *Tert. Apol.* c. 21.] Nor could they obtain, even this privilege from any of the ſucceeding Emperors (except *Julian*) but with great difficulty, and only for one day in a year, to ſee and bewail its Ruins; and that upon paying a conſiderable Sum. *Univ. Hiſt.* B. 3. p. 40. *Euſeb.* E. H. 21. 6. comp. *Baſnage* Hiſt. I. B. 6. c. 9. S. 28, 29. et *Witſii* Exerc. Acad. 12. 16. 'Thus all the Attempts of that perfidious Nation towards the Recovery 'of their former Condition, ſerved only to heighten and 'aggravate thoſe Calamities with which they had been 'ſo often threatned by the Prophets, and to reduce them 'to the deplorable State, in which we now ſee them; 'being a Crew of contemptible Vagabonds, diſperſed all 'over the World, without King, Temple or Pontiff; 'driven from their own Country, and not daring to ſet 'foot in it, even as Paſſengers and Strangers. The Edict 'of *Adrian* excluding all *Jews* from *Jeruſalem*, extended 'to ſuch of them as had embraced the *Chriſtian* Religion; ſo that they too being obliged to quit the City, the 'Church was by that means deliver'd from the Servitude 'of the Law; for till that time, not only the Biſhops of

'*Je-*

well as the Goſpel Propheſies;[u] and become the beſt Evidences, becauſe unwilling ones, in favour of the *Chriſtian* Religion. And as the *Ro-*

'*Jeruſalem* had been choſen from among the crircum-'ciſed *Chriſtians*, but all the converted *Jews* joined to 'the obſervance of the Goſpel that of the Law.' *Univ. Hiſt.* ib. p. 41.

[u] *Deut.* 28. *Matt.* 23, 35, 38, *&c. Luke* 21. 24. *Deut.* 32. 21. *Rom.* 10. 19. *Jer.* 15. 4. 25. 9. *Hoſ.* 3. 4. In what a remarkable manner every Curſe deſcribed by *Moſes* has been to the full inflicted on that ſtill miſerable People, may be ſeen in *Patrick* upon *Deut.* 28. Mr. *Hallet*, [Diſc. V. 1. p. 3, *&c.*] ſuppoſes that in the 51th *Pſ.* v. 14. the *Bloodguiltineſs* here confeſs'd relates, not to that of *David* himſelf, which accompanied his other ſin of *Adultery*, (as is intimated in the *Title*, tho' no mention be made of the latter in the whole Pſalm) but to the Murder of *Meſſiah*, which the Body of the *Jews* are to acknowledge in thoſe Words. This he confirms from V. 16—19. which could not poſſibly be true of *David*'s days, but muſt be written prophetically for the general uſe of the *Jews* ſince the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*. The like he obſerves of ſome other Pſalms, particularly *Pſ.* 74. v. 3. 9, *&c.* The like is obſerv'd of *Pſal.* 22. 69. 88. in which the ſeveral paſſages which expreſsly deſcribe the Crucifixion of our Lord, are pointed out by *Vitringa*, Obſerv. T. 1. L. 2. c. 3. p. 380, If this appear to be the caſe, how ſtrongly does it juſtify our Lords appeal to the *Pſalms* as treating of him! *Luke* 24. 44. And what a noble argument may hence ariſe for the Conviction and Converſion of that extraordinary People, when once the *Veil, which is on their Hearts*, ſhall *be taken away*, as by the ſame Spirit of Prophecy we are aſſured it ſhall.

man

man Empire, by its Increaſe and Settlement at the time of *Chriſt*'s coming, contributed remarkably to this ſame end, ſo did it no leſs afterwards, by its Decline and Diſſolution; at which time *Chriſtianity* was ſcatter'd abroad with it, among the *Northern* Nations, and carried to the remoteſt Iſles, in the ſame manner as the *Grecian* Arts had been diſpers'd over all *Aſia*, upon the Diſſolution of *Alexander*'s Empire.

By theſe, and the like means, was the Goſpel divulg'd every where; and the Sound of it might be ſaid, without an Hyperbole, to have *gone into all the Earth, and its Words unto the ends of the World:* [w] and where it has prevailed, it prevail'd more entirely than any other Religion could; which (as an excellent Author obſerves, *) makes a great Abatement in the Diſproportion that Heatheniſm in general may ſeem to have, in its Numbers, above Chriſtianity. And though ſome Nations at firſt View ſeem to have quite loſt it again, or greatly abuſed and corrupted it; yet upon a more ſtrict ſurvey, we diſcover a great deal of it mix'd in their ſeveral Syſtems, and hid under different Names; which we have reaſon to think, will,

[w] *Rom.* 10. 18. See the Authors below.

* *Jenkin*, V. 1. p. 347.

at length, be found of them more fully; and like ſeed ſown, revive in its own ſeaſon. Nor is it now in ſo narrow a compaſs as is generally imagined.[x] Though there be many large Countries where it is not eſtabliſhed, or formally profeſs'd; yet are there ſome traces, both of this and former Revelations, in moſt Parts of the World; as appears from ſeveral Modern Writers:[y] and though we often find it blended with impure Rites, and groſs Superſtitions, among a barbarous People; yet at the ſame time we find that it has had a very conſiderable effect, even upon them; and will, we truſt, in time lead them to a more pure and perfect Profeſſion of it, when they become ripe for ſuch a Manifeſtation: and as ſome Corruptions, both in the Natural and Civil Body, generally make way for a more perfect Soundneſs, and thorough Reformation; and then are themſelves cured: ſo may it be in the Body Spiritual. Thus that thick Cloud of *Popery*, which has been ſo long hanging over the Weſtern Church, made way for a brighter Light perhaps than ever at the

[x] V. *Fabricii* Lux Evang. toti orbi exoriens. c. 36, *&c.* or *Millar*'s Hiſt. of Propag. c. 7. 8, *&c.*

[y] See many of them cited, and more referr'd to, by *Jenkin*, *Fabricius* and *Millar*. add *Young*'s Hiſt. Diſſ. V. 2. p. 218, &c.

Reforma-

Reformation; * (which help'd greatly to amend, at leaſt the Diſcipline of that very Church, who refuſed to admit any material Alteration in her Doctrines †) and may ſtill, by its reſemblance to the Worſhip of *Heathens*, lead them more eaſily and inſenſibly out of their groſſer Errors; and be no improper introduction to a more pure Religion among them; and when it has ſerved that end, its own Idolatrys be aboliſhed; and by its Judgments alarm, and convince the *Jews*, (to whom it has been hitherto a Rock of Offence) and ſo make way for a ſtill purer, as well as more enlarg'd eſtate of *Chriſtianity*, among both *Jews* and *Gentiles*. ‡

* See *Worthington*'s Eſſay, p. 152, &c.

† See *Hakewill*'s Apology, p. 547.

‡ See *Edward*'s Survey, p. 715. or *Scott*'s Chriſtian Life, Part. 2. V. 2. c. 7. p. 489. Some great end will moſt undoubtedly be ſerv'd by the permiſſion of *Popery* ſo long, even after the *Myſtery* of its *Iniquity* is ſeen through by the generality of its own profeſſors; as ſeems to be in a great meaſure the caſe at preſent. Even during its darkeſt Ages, which afford the very ſtongeſt Objection to that *Progreſs* in Religion we ſuppoſe, Chriſtianity was ſtill ſpreading wider and wider, in the more diſtant parts of the World; and where *Popiſh* Converts now become the Seed of *Chriſtians*, who may not improperly be compared to the Proſelytes of the Gate among the *Jews*; being probably the firſt fruits of the Harveſt God intends to have among the Heathens of thoſe Parts; and after they are fully converted,

But not to dwell on Conjectures; this we know aſſuredly, that every People, Nation, and Language ſhall at laſt embrace the true Religion; and all Kingdoms of the World become the Kingdoms of Chriſt. [a]

Secondly. As to what may be called more particularly the *internal* Propagation of *Chri-*

verted, may be moſt ſerviceable to promote the Converſion of others. [See *Jurieu*. Pref. to Accompl. of Proph. or *Millar* 2 V. p. 230. 364.] We may affirm that *Popery* there is ſtill better than *Paganiſm*; and by its ſo great Reſemblance of the Pagan Superſtitions, (particularly in the point of Images) it more eaſily inſinuates itſelf among ſuch People, and may be conſider'd therefore, in ſome reſpects, as no very unfit Introduction to a more perfect State of Religion in future Ages; whenever they ſhall become capable of it. See *Colliber*'s Impartial Enquiry, p. 138. 2 Edit. with *Gage*'s Survey of the *Weſt-Indies*.

[a] *Pſ.* 2. 8. 22. 27. 72. 11. 86. 9. *Iſai.* c. 2. 2. c. 9. 7. c. 11. 9–11. c. 40. 5. c. 49. 6. c. 52. 10. c. 55. 5. c. 56. 7. c. 60. 12. c. 66. 18, 22. *Ezek.* 39. 23. 29. *Dan.* 2. 44. 7. 14, 27. *Hoſ.* 1. 10. 3. 4. *Mich.* 5. 4. *Am.* 9. 14. *Zeph.* 3. 9. *Zech.* 9. 10. 12. 10. 14. 9. *Mal.* 1. 11. *Matt.* 24. 14. *Mark* 13. 10. *Luke* 3. 6. 21. 24. *Acts* 13. 47. *Rom.* 8. 19, &c. 11. 25. 14. 11, &c. 1 *Cor.* 15. 25. 2 *Cor.* 3. 14, &c. *Rev.* 11. 15. 14. 6. From ſuch Texts as theſe Mr. *Worthington* infers, that the Kingdom of *Chriſt* will be an *Univerſal Theocracy*, whereof that under the *Jews* was in ſome reſpects typical; *Eſſ.* 292. &c. Where there ſhall be univerſal *Holineſs*, 302. and Obedience to the Goſpel Precepts in their ſtricteſt Senſe, 309. and either an *Univerſal Language*, or a perfect *Union*, in Faith and Worſhip, 308.

ſtiani-

ſtianity, or the Comprehenſion of the whole Goſpel Scheme, the ſame method is carried on, though not in ſo viſible a manner; or capable of being diſtinguiſhed by ſuch remakable Periods. That perfect *Analogy* between Religion and the common courſe of Nature, which has been ſo beautifully diſplay'd by a late excellent Writer,† holds no leſs true, I believe, in this reſpect; and that as all Arts and Sciences, every Improvement in natural and civil Life, are ſtill drawing nearer to perfection; as we become daily better acquainted with the Syſtem of the World; as well as that of the Univerſe; with the Nature of the Heavens and Earth; with that of our own Body, and Mind; in ſhort, as every Branch of Knowledge has been all along enlarging, and improving itſelf; and every ſucceſſive Age, not only enjoys the Diſcoveries of the foregoing, but adds ſtill greater, and more valuable ones of its own; ‡ ſo it is probable, that the Knowledge of Religion alone is not at a ſtand; but on the contrary, that as we continually advance in the Study of GOD's Works, ſo we ſhall come to a proportionably better Underſtanding of his *Word*: As by all

† The Ld. Biſhop of *Briſtol.*

‡ See Part. 3.

theſe Means, Human Reaſon is ſtill growing more perfect, ſo by the ſame Means, Divine Revelation will gradually clear up; and *Chriſtianity* itſelf draw nearer to its *Fulneſs*. What is here ſuppoſed, has been remarkably confirm'd in Fact ſince the *Reformation*; about which Time theſe two extraordinary Diſcoveries of *Printing*, and the Uſe of the *Compaſs*, in *Europe*, jointly contributed to the Diſperſion of Learning, and Enlarging of *Commerce*, over the World; and at the ſame Time, gave a new Publication of *Chriſtianity*; and in much greater Purity, than it had been in before, for many Centuries. Ever ſince which Time, all three have been continually gaining Ground. New Light has been given to the Prophetic, and other more abſtruſe Parts of Scripture, in every ſucceſſive Age, and almoſt by every Writer; as a very able Judge aſſures us.[a] The Grounds of our Religion are in general much better underſtood, more clearly and rationally explain'd, and vindicated; and from what appears at preſent, we have reaſon to think, they will be ſtill more and more ſo. [b] We may venture to ſay, that in our own

[a] *Newton* on *Daniel*, c. 1.

[b] ‘ At tandem, ſuperiore præſertim ſeculo et hoc noſtro, ‘ cum

Nation, there never were more free and worthy Notions of God, and his Providence; nor were the Deſigns, and various Diſpenſations of Religion ever generally ſo well underſtood

‘ cum Diſciplinæ omnes et quæ pertinent ad Antiquitatis
‘ Linguarumque demortuarum intelligentiam, et quæ
‘ rerum ipſarum cognitionem tradunt, et quæ veri in
‘ quavis arte inveniendi ac exponendi rationem docent,
‘ ad multo majorem perfectionem adductæ eſſent; anti-
‘ quiſſima illa Religionis Divinitus revelatæ monumenta
‘ multo melius explicari, certioraque ex iis conſectaria
‘ duci, Capitaque omnia Theologica rectius tradi cæpe-
‘ runt quam unquam antea ab Apoſtolorum ætate factum
‘ fuerat. Quod multo citius contigiſſet, ſi Majores noſtri
‘ Judicio ſuo malluiſſent uti quam alieno; neque enim
‘ ingenia defuiſſe puto poſterioribus ſeculis, ſed artem
‘ duntaxat, quæ nimia cæcaque admiratione priorum op-
‘ preſſa jacebat. Quare contigit idem Theologiæ Chri-
‘ ſtianæ quod Philoſophiæ; quæ tum demum cum fructu,
‘ ut par erat excoli et perfici cæpit, cum homines cæpere
‘ recordari, ſibi Rationem non minus eſſe datam quam
‘ *Ariſtoteli*; excuſſaque admiratione Antiquitatis, Dogmata
‘ ejus ad examen revocare. Ut igitur qui nunc pulcherri-
‘ ma Recentiorum in Philoſophia inventa oblivioni man-
‘ dari vellent, ut *Ariſtotelea* Decreta ſola iterum obtine-
‘ rent, tenebras luci præferre merito cenſerentur: ita qui
‘ nunc nos revocant ad Elementa, ac prima veluti tenta-
‘ mina *Patrum* Græcorum aut Latinorum, pluriſque ea
‘ fieri volunt quam quæ nunc ſcimus; ii virum adultæ
‘ ætatis pertinaci ſtudio longaque experientia edoctum, ad
‘ pueritiæ ruditatem redire volunt; majorique in pretio
‘ habere quæ puer animo agitabat, quam quæ adultus
‘ maturo judicio penſitavit. *Inimici ſunt Profectus omnis in*

as they are at preſent. Never was Learning, and real Knowledge, ſo fully and equally diſpers'd among all Parties, and Profeſſions of Men. Nor is there any Sect, however wild and extravagant it may have been at its firſt ſetting out, but evidently partakes of theſe Improvements. And though, while the minds of Men are warm and eager in the queſt of Truth, while they are in continual agitation, and daily teeming with new Inventions; many Monſters will ſpring up (as may naturally enough be expected) together with it; and ſtrange Errors and Abſurdities be advanc'd, in ſuch full Freedom of Enquiry, and Debate; and though this Increaſe of Knowledge be attended with an Increaſe of Libertiniſm, and Extravagance of all kinds; and an Evil Spirit of Infidelity, and Prophaneneſs, be at the ſame time gone abroad; yet is this neither ſo uncommon, or uncon-

' *ſacris Literis, adeoque ipſius Veritatis. Talenta Divinitus* ' *nobis data, et nuper mirum in modum aucta, minuere atque* ' *infodere omni ope conantur. Quod ab iis perfici nec Deus,* ' *nec Homines ſinent, donec in aliquo terrarum angulo Literæ* ' *et Veritatis amor vigebunt.*' *Clerc.* Ep. Crit. 4. p. 151, &c. comp. *Ibbot*'s B. Lect. 2 Part Serm. 4. p. 119. and *Lactant.* de Orig. Err. L. 2. S. 7. To which may be added *Wotton*'s two excellent Chapters on the *Philological* and *Theological* Learning of the *Moderns*. Reſl. c. 28, and 29. and *Worthington*'s Eſſay, c. 8.

formable

formable to the courſe of Divine Providence in other reſpects, as to make us deſpair of ſeeing it attended with the uſual Conſequences: We have ſtill reaſon to truſt, that when Truth and Knowledge have once fully got the better of Error, and Superſtition, this Spirit of Reformation will at length reform, and rectify itſelf; and we ſhall have more and more of the true Life and Spirit of our Religion, as we draw nearer to thoſe times, wherein the ſure Word of Prophecy has fix'd its Reign.

I am far from imagining that *Chriſtianity* is yet come to its mature ſtate; that it is underſtood in the whole extent, or held in its utmoſt purity and perfection, by any particular Church[c]. But as when it was firſt preached, Men were fit to hear, and profit by it in a competent Degree; (as we have ſhown) as that was a very proper time to divulge it, in order to improve

[c] 'It will not be thought any imputation on *Chriſtia-*
'*nity*, that all its Myſteries and Doctrines have not been
'as yet ſo fully diſcover'd, and underſtood by the ſeveral
'Sects and Parties of *Chriſtians*, as to come to a ſettled
'Agreement concerning them; if it be conſidered, that
'no human Science hath been brought to ſuch perfection
'as not to admit of farther Improvements, many of which
'began to be cultivated long before the Commencement
'of *Chriſtianity*.' Pref. to Mr. *Worthington*'s Eſſay, p. 7. comp. *Burnet* de Fide et Off. c. 5. p. 80. c. 8. p. 177.

the

the World; which it did very conſiderably [d]; excelling all former Diſpenſations of Religion, and Syſtems of Science; refining the Notions, even of thoſe who did not formally receive it [a]: and yet was itſelf for ſomewhile but partially communicated [b], and imperfectly underſtood: So now, 'tis of much greater advantage to the World in general; and yet ſtill capable of Increaſe; it waits for its own Fulneſs; nor ſhall Mankind receive the proper influence, and advantage of it, till their Minds be much farther

[d] See the Bp. of *London*'s ſecond Paſtoral Letter, or *Worthington*'s Eſſay, c. 7.

[a] This is very viſible in the Writings of thoſe Philoſophers who came after its promulgation, as *Epictetus*, *Plutarch*, *Max. Tyr.* and more eſpecially *M. Antoninus*, who is well acquainted with the *Chriſtian* Virtue of *Humility*, among many others, and frequently inſiſts upon it. The like may be obſerv'd of *Porphyry* and *Hierocles*, [ſee paſſages in *Burnet* de Fid. et Off. p. 29.] as alſo in *Seneca*. The like Obſervation is made, with great Juſtice, on their *Forms of Devotion* by Mr. *Jortin*. Diſcourſes, p. 228, 229. The ſame thing is own'd by the Emperor *Julian*, in his excellent Advice for a Reformation in their Philoſophy, by taking in the *Chriſtian* Morals. Ep. ad *Arſac.* 49. V. *Cave* Introd. p. 32, &c. *Millar* Propag. p. 402. or Bp. *Leng*'s B. Lect. S. 12. p. 111. Fol. add *Jenkin*, Part 3. c. 5. p. 386.

[b] See the ſeveral Periods of this Communication accurately ſettled by the Author of *Miſc. Sac.* in his Abſtract of the Scr. Hiſt. of the Apoſtles, and Pref. p. 14, &c.

open'd;

open'd; their Reaſon more fully exerciſed, in this great *Myſtery* of Divine Love. We muſt ſure be ſenſible, that the Scriptures are very far from being thoroughly underſtood by us, who are of ſo reform'd a Church; live under ſuch an excellent Government; and in this enlighten'd Age; not even thoſe parts of them which treat of paſt States, and Diſpenſations; much leſs thoſe which regard Futurity. How long is it ſince men were ſo very ignorant of its Doctrines, as to fix that horrid one of *Abſolute Reprobation*, upon St. *Paul* himſelf? and 'tis to be fear'd, that almoſt as hard things are yet believ'd of him, and other inſpired Writers. We are ſtill apt to confine the Goſpel of our Lord, as his primitive Diſciples ſometime did, to particular Nations, Churches, Sects, Opinions; to contend vehemently, either about things in their own Nature abſtruſe, and difficult to be underſtood, and therefore leſs neceſſary to be determin'd; or elſe ſuch lighter Matters, as the Ceremonies, Circumſtances, and outward Forms of its Adminiſtration[c]; inſtead of explaining

[c] 'The Emperor *Juſtinian*, ſays *Joh. Claubergius*, in 'his Inſtitutions, did us the Service, and himſelf the Ho- 'nour, by abrogating the ſcrupulous Obſervation of 'ſtarcht ſubtil Forms and Niceties, to reduce the Study 'and Practice of the Law to its native ſimplicity and 'plainneſs. It would be happy for the Chriſtian world, 'could

and recommending the true Nature, End, and Deſign of it; and being intent upon enlarging its real Kingdom; and taking care to maintain thoſe Works, which are intrinſically good and ever profitable unto men [d]: inſtead of attending to that *more excellent way*, which the ſame bleſſed Apoſtle ſhew'd us*; that *Bond of Perfection* which he has ſo earneſtly exhorted us to

'could it find a man who would do ſo much in favour of 'Theology, who rejecting litigious Intricacies, needleſs 'Curioſities, and vain Niceties, which the School Phi- 'loſophy has introduced into Theology, would reinſtate 'it in its ancient majeſtick Purity. If what *Hen. Alting* 'ſlightly attempted, under every head of Divinity, verbal 'Controverſies were ſeparated from real; and in every 'Controverſy what *did not* concern the Queſtion in de- 'bate was diſtinguiſh'd from what *did*; a Multitude of 'Diſputations would be forever ſilenc'd. But this is ra- 'ther to be wiſh'd than expected in our Days; as it is 'ſafer to lament the faults of our Age than to reprove 'them.' *Werenfelſius* of Logomachys, p. 16. a Book well worth the reading in *England*. V. *Stoll.* Introd. ad Hiſt. Lit. p. 571.

[d] *Tit.* 3. 8, 9. 'The *great Offence* — which in all Na- 'tions, and in all Ages has hindred the Propagation of the 'Goſpel of Truth, has been a hypocritical Zeal to ſecure 'by Force a fictitious Uniformity of Opinion, which is 'indeed impoſſible in nature; inſtead of the real *Chriſtian* 'Unity of Sincerity, Charity, and mutual Forbearance, 'which is the *Bond of Perfectneſs*.' Dr. *Clarke*'s Serm. 18. V. 6. 8vo Fol. V. 2. S. 18.

* 1 *Cor.* 12. 31.

put

put on above all things *; which he has taught us to eſteem above all *Faith*, and *Knowledge*; and even the beſt miraculous *Gifts*. — But though the Face of *Chriſtianity* be ſtill miſerably darken'd, and deform'd; (of which more below) though ſome Nations ſeem to be in their *Childhood* yet, and cannot receive it; and others grow ſo vicious, and profligate, as to be inclined to reject it: though in ſome Ages it ſeems to be quite hid in Darkneſs, and ſunk under Ignorance, and Superſtition; in others, born down with the Torrent of Lewdneſs, and Libertiniſm: though like the Sea, it have its Ebbs and Flows, and leave ſome Lands, to gain on others; nay, though, ſometimes it ſeem to be at a general ſtand; and even retreating: yet, nevertheleſs, we have reaſon to conclude, that upon the whole, its motion is progreſſive; and that each very Lett tends, in the main, to accelerate this Progreſs; (as was obſerved in the beginning) that its Power is ſtill viſibly, or inviſibly, enlarging over the World; and that it will always go on to do ſo, till the Kingdom of *Chriſt* be fully come; till it be *within us*, and known by all, from the leaſt to the greateſt; till the *Everlaſting Goſpel* † go forth, and be ſo thoroughly underſtood and embraced, as

* *Coloſſ.* 3. 14. † *Rev.* 14. 6.

to

to bring on the *Fulneſs of the Gentiles*; and by their means the Reſtoration of God's own People, the *Jews*; as he has often foretold[a]: and ſo *the whole Earth be full of the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea.*

From the whole we have reaſon to conclude, that the Objection, mentioned in the beginning of theſe Diſcourſes, is abſolutely groundleſs; that there is nothing in the time and manner of the Chriſtian Diſpenſation inconſiſtent with infinite Wiſdom, and Goodneſs: that God is by no means partial, or arbitrary in the diſtribution of his Bleſſings; but at all times takes care of all Mankind; and that this great ſcheme of Revelation was contriv'd, and carried on, in the beſt manner, for the World in general: which ought chiefly to be regarded by us, as it is in the Eye of our common Father. When we come to particular Ages, and Nations, it is the ſame as with particular Perſons, the ſame Benefits are not, cannot be confer'd on all; and the Diſpenſations of Religion, are perfectly ana-

[a] See the Texts above, p. 183. Many more to the ſame purpoſe are collected in a Note to Part 2. c. 11. p. 187. Fol. of *Kidder*'s Demonſtr. To which may be added *Whitby*'s Appendix to his Comment on *Rom.* 11. and Treatiſe on the true *Millenium*, c. 2. *Burnet*'s App. to his B. *De Stat. Mort. Worthington*'s Eſſay, p. 295. *Taylor* on *Rom.* 11. 26. p. 344.

logous

logous to thoſe of Providence in the conſtant courſe of both the natural, and moral World; and theſe perhaps are capable of being ſhown to be the beſt upon the whole; as may in part appear from the former Diſcourſe.[a] If Chriſt was to come once for all, he muſt appear in ſome particular Time and Place; which could not be equally near to all the ſucceſſive Generations of Mankind; nor could all have the ſame Privileges, of ſeeing and converſing with him in the Fleſh: and as they are *bleſſed* who have not ſeen, and yet believed; ſo are they too, moſt undoubtedly (though perhaps in a lower degree) who having not ſo much as heard of *Chriſt*, are yet in a good meaſure qualified to receive his Doctrine, were it delivered to them.

The great Scheme of our Redemption in *Chriſt*, was laid before the World began;* and if we take the account which itſelf gives of its Deſign, we ſhall find the greateſt of its Benefits extended to all Mankind; namely, the Covenant for reſtoring the whole Poſterity of *Adam*, to that *Immortality* which he forfeited. *The Gift of God is eternal Life, through Jeſus*

[a] See this more at large in Bp. *Buttler*'s Analogy, Part. 2. c. 6, *&c.*

* *Eph.* 1. 4. *Col.* 1. 26. *Tit.* 1. 2. 1 *Pet.* 1. 20.

Chriſt

Chriſt our Lord. † Or, eternal Life is not in any reſpect a Property of our own Nature, as derived from *Adam*; but an additional Privilege conferr'd by God, as the purchaſe of our Saviour and Redeemer *Chriſt*. *Death* was *aboliſh'd*, and *Life* and *Incorruptibility* [b], or a Life in Incorruption *, fix'd in the Divine Decrees from the Beginning, in view of *Chriſt*'s future Ranſom; [c] though not ſo fully *brought to Light*, or publiſh'd to the World in general, till the actual Accompliſhment of it by him, in our own Nature. As to any particular Privileges that can be ſuppoſed to be annex'd to the bare Belief in him, or explicit Profeſſion of it; we have Reaſon to think that no leſs were enjoy'd by thoſe good Men of old, who by the dim Light of Prophecy, or Tradition, beheld this Day, and rejoiced in it; who ſaw theſe Promiſes afar off, and were perſuaded of them, and embraced them. * Faith in him to come was the ſame in proportion to the Evidence as

† *Rom.* 6. 23. See *Hallet*'s Obſervat. V. 1. p. 326, &c.

* 1 *Cor.* 15. 42. 53, 54.

[b] Αφθαρσια, 2 *Tim.* 1. 10. *i. e.* of the Body raiſed, 1 *Cor.* 15. 52.

[c] *Matt.* 20. 28. *Mark* 10. 45. *Rev.* 13. 8. *Acts* 15. 11. 18. *Heb.* 9. 15. *Gal.* 3. 17.

* *Heb.* 11. 13. *Gal.* 3. 8.

in

in him paſt; and muſt be equally meritorious.[a] Nor have we any reaſon to doubt but that the ſame Benefits, in kind at leaſt, whatever they be, might accrue from a pious Prefiguration of his Death, with a lively Faith, in *Sacrifice*; as now do from remembring it, in the ſame manner, in his Holy *Supper*. So far then it might be the ſame when ever he came. And when we ſpeak of the *Chriſtian* Scheme being abſolutely *neceſſary to Salvation*, † we underſtand *Salvation* in the Scripture Senſe of that Word; as implying a particular *State, and Degree* of Happineſs; or as the *Chriſtian*'s *Heaven*; [b] not as the ſole Condition of enjoying everlaſting *Life*; or as neceſſary, in all Men, to the avoiding abſolute Miſery; or eſcaping the pains of *Hell*. He has told us that in his Father's Houſe are many *Manſions*; States ſuited to every Degree of Holineſs, and Virtue; and as it often appears that Men under very different Diſpenſations here, differ but almoſt inſenſibly from each other, in the abovemen-

[a] See Dr. *Denne*'s Serm. before the Society for the Prop. of the G. p. 53, *&c.*

† p. 50.

[b] See *Rymer*'s Repreſent. of Rev. Rel. p. 104. or *Whitby* on *Rom.* 2. 14.

tion'd Qualifications; can we conceive that their States of Retribution ſhall be ſo infinitely different hereafter, as thoſe of *Heaven*, and *Hell*, are commonly believ'd to be? No doubt there are great Advantages, and ſure Promiſes, belonging to thoſe who have been ſo happy as to be included in the *Chriſtian* Covenant; and hold it in Faith, and Purity. But let not ſuch exclude others from the Mercies of their common Lord; or murmur at the good Man of the houſe, if theſe alſo receive every man his *Penny*; *Whether they ſhall not ſometime hereafter be call'd into the *Vineyard*, and at length become acquainted with that Perſon who has done ſo great things for them, as well as us; [a] or what Amends may be made them for the Want of thoſe ſingular Advantages which we here enjoy; is known only to that God of all Mercies, in whoſe Hands they are. What our Saviour ſaid of the *Gentiles*, in Contradiſtinction to the *Jews*, may be no leſs true perhaps between *Chriſtians*, and the reſt of the World, that never heard of *Chriſt*, but yet are prepared to

* *Matt.* 20.

[a] See *Stainoe*'s Enquiry into the State of thoſe Men in another Life who never heard of *Chriſt* in this, from *Rev.* 20.

enter,

enter, and in a good meaſure worthy to be admitted into his Kingdom; — who have duly attended to that *Candle of the Lord*, which is ſet up in the Breaſt of every Man; and which would lead ſuch to a clearer Light of his Goſpel; — *other Sheep I have which are not of this Fold; them alſo muſt I bring, and they ſhall hear my Voice, and there ſhall be one Fold and one Shepherd.*[b] To them likewiſe may *the Times of refreſhing come, from the Preſence of the Lord.*[c] — However, the caſe of ſuch will undoubtedly be very different from that of thoſe, who frequently, and perverſely, reject the Counſel of God againſt themſelves; reſolved to truſt to their own Strength, and *going about to eſtabliſh their own Righteouſneſs; and not ſubmitting themſelves unto the Righteouſneſs of God.**

To conclude, with our Bleſſed Saviour's Admonition in a like caſe, † *If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.*

Let us inſtead of judging others, or determining of their State; take care to ſet a due value on, and to ſecure our own Salvation: inſtead of charging God fooliſhly, and ungrate-

[b] *Joh.* 10. 16. comp. *Matt.* 8. 11. and *Luke* 13. 29.
[c] *Acts* 3. 19. comp. *Rom.* 8. 22.
* *Rom.* 10. 3. † *Joh.* 21. 22.

fully, for not having imparted the ſame Benefits to All, which we enjoy, let us rather be giving him continual Thanks for his *unſpeakable Gift*; and endeavouring to employ it to his Glory. Let us be intent on Studying the pure Word of God, and careful to interpret it in ſuch a manner as may do moſt Honour to its Author; and at all Times encourage a free, and an impartial Study of it. * 'Tis now high Time to do this, and to awake out of Sleep,

* Dr. *Benſon*'s Note on the laſt Verſe of 2 *Pet.* is ſo very appoſite to the Caſe in hand, that I cannot avoid citing ſome part of it. 'This may reprove thoſe ſlothful 'Proteſtants who will not read the Scriptures with that 'Care and Attention which is requiſite to the Under-'ſtanding of them: —and much more thoſe who are pro-'feſſed Enemies to encreaſing Knowledge, who would 'have all new Diſcoveries carefully ſuppreſſed; and 'would have Chriſtians ſteddily adhere to the Articles 'and Traditions received from their fallible Forefathers: '*i. e.* We are never to gain more Knowledge, never (by 'any Means) to grow wiſer. Whereas what Reaſon can 'be aſſigned, why we ſhould not reject the Miſtakes of 'our Forefathers, as they rejected thoſe of the Church 'of *Rome*, and of their Forefathers? They who are afraid 'of *new Light*, and increaſing Knowledge, ſeem to be-'tray a bad Cauſe, and to be conſcious that their Opi-'nions will not ſtand the teſt of a ſevere Examination. 'And they plainly contradict this Advice, or Direction 'of St. *Peter*, *But grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge 'of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.*

ſince

ſince our Reformation is much nearer than when we firſt believed: and it is to be wiſh'd that we ourſelves could be perſuaded to examine our own State, before others are obliged to do it for us; that we were diſpoſed to help and forward, rather than check the Progreſs of every ſerious Enquiry; and ſtop any farther Improvements in the Knowledge of that, which of all Things deſerves, and wants them moſt; rather than withſtand a general Reformation in Religion, by rigourouſly inſiſting on, and obtruding ſuch things for Doctrine, as are the Commandments of Men, and very foreign to the Eſſence of it; inſtead of either entertaining that Antichriſtian kind of Spirit, which calls down Fire from Heaven on all who don't receive us; which delights in ſtraitening the way that leads to Life, and ſhutting up the Kingdom of Heaven againſt Men; or elſe incurring the Woe denounc'd againſt thoſe Hypocrites, who are deſirous of lading Men with heavy Burdens, and binding upon them Things which are too grievous to be born; and which they know that none need to touch with one of their Fingers.*

As we ſee the Faults and Follies of paſt Ages, a double Woe will be to us, if inſtead

* *Matt.* 23. *Luke* 11.

of taking Warning by them, and avoiding the like, we are reſolv'd to tread the ſame Steps, and fill up the Meaſure of our Fathers.

Let *us*, who have leiſure given us for this very purpoſe, think on theſe Things, and ſtudy to diſcern *the Signs of the Times*; that we may be prepared for them, and profit by them: that we may not only ſave ourſelves in the Day of Trouble, but alſo contribute to the Safety of our *Jerūſalem*; and be ready to watch over, and defend it whenever, or from what Quarter ſoever, the Enemy cometh. As we are a City upon a Hill, let us ſhew forth the Praiſes of him that has called us, out of Darkneſs into his marvellous Light; let our Light ſhine before Men, and let us freely communicate it to them who ſtill ſit in Darkneſs; and ſtrive to adorn the Doctrine of our Lord. As we live in a more enlighten'd Age, and are intruſted with a greater ſhare of Talents; let us walk worthy of it, and endeavour to excell others as much in our Improvements. Above all Things, let us labour to bring forth the genuine Fruits of our Religion, in true Holineſs and Virtue; and dayly draw nigh unto God, in the Imitation of his *Moral Perfection*; which is the Sum and Subſtance; the End and Aim, of all *Religion*.

III. The

III.

The Progreſs of *Natural Religion* and *Science*, OR, The continual Improvement of the *World in general.*

Antiquitas Seculi, Juventus Mundi.
BACON de Augment. Scient. L. 1. c. 5.

Antiquity *I unfeignedly honour and reverence, but why I ſhould be bound to reverence the Ruſt and Refuſe, the Droſs and Dregs, the Warts and Wens thereof, I am yet to ſeek. — As in the little, ſo in the great World, reaſon will tell you that Old Age or Antiquity is to be accounted by the farther diſtance from the Beginning, and the nearer approach to the End: and as grey Beards are for Wiſdom and Judgement to be preferred before young green Heads, becauſe they have more Experience in Affairs: ſo likewiſe for the ſame Cauſe the preſent Times are to be preferred before the Infancy or Youth of the World, having the Hiſtory and Practiſe of former Ages to inform us, which they wanted. — In diſgracing the preſent Times therefore you diſgrace Antiquity properly ſo call'd.*
HAKEWILL. Apol. p. 132.

ECCLES. vii. 10.

Say not thou what is the Cauſe why the former Days were better than theſe? for thou doſt not enquire wiſely concerning this.

THE badneſs of the Times has been a common Topic of Complaint in every *Age*, and that they are growing worſe and worſe continually, is what ſome Perſons think themſelves obliged to inſiſt upon, with no leſs frequency and vehemence; how hard ſoever they find it to account for this in any reſpect. The former of theſe arguments, if urg'd only to expoſe and give a check to ſome particular predominant Vices, (for which indeed all Ages have afforded too much room) may be of conſtant uſe, and often neceſſary. But when the latter is added to it, and both carried ſo far as to make us diſcontented, and uneaſy with ourſelves, and troubleſome to one another; to ſet us a quarrelling with the Station, and Society in which we are placed; a murmuring at, and ſpeaking evil of the Government we live under; deſpiſing every human Dominion, and even repining at the Conduct of Divine Providence, and

and miſtaking the Iſſue of its Diſpenſations to ſuch a degree as muſt confound our Judgement, and unhinge our Faith in the unlimited Goodneſs, Power and Wiſdom of their Author; — then 'tis high time to correct an Error of this kind, and enquire into the true State, and Hiſtory of the World, in the abovemention'd particular.

In order to which, ſo far as the compaſs of ſuch a Diſcourſe will allow, I purpoſe in the firſt place.

I. To ſhew the Falſity of this Complaint in ſeveral reſpects.

II. Secondly, to point out ſome of its ill Conſequences; which may be ſufficient to juſtify the Preacher's obſervation in the Text, *viz.* that this way of judging is no very *wiſe* one.

The Deſign of the Book from which theſe words are taken, is to examine into the Courſe of this World in general; to conſider the Nature of its Enjoyments, and the Ends propoſed in our purſuit of them. No one ſaw farther into theſe things, or better underſtood their real value; none perhaps had a mind more elevated, and refined above them, or could, in a more lively manner, diſplay the Vanity and Emptineſs thereof on ſome occaſions, than King *Solomon*; yet, where he meets with thoſe who

treat

treat the Subject ſo very injudiciouſly, as both to diſparage the Works of God, by repreſenting them to be ever going backward and on the decline; and to diſtract the Minds of Men, by teaching them to undervalue, and grow weary of the preſent Benefits, through an invidious retroſpect to former Days: — when things are placed in ſuch a light as this, we find him abſolutely diſapproving of the view, and all thoſe Queſtions which ariſe from thence; intimating that the very Foundation of them is not true in fact.

To make this appear more fully, let us conſider ſome of the Advantages of Life, both *natural* and *acquired*, in order to ſee, whether there be any ſigns that theſe are now diſpens'd in a leſs liberal way than formerly; or whether the reverſe is not more probable.

As to the Fruitfulneſs of the Earth, and Clemency of Seaſons, the Temperature of the Air, and Influence of Heavenly Bodies, the vulgar miſtake of their Decay, and tendency to Diſſolution, has, I think, long ſince been explod-ed [a].

Whatever might have been the employment of Man, had he continued innocent, (which yet

[a] A ſufficient Confutation of it may be ſeen in *Hakewill*'s Apology, paſſim.

we

we ſee was not exempted from the Care of *dreſſing*, and *keeping* that ſpot of Ground in which *Adam* was placed[a]) upon his Fall, a State of Toil and Labour became neceſſary; in order to ſecure the Virtue, Health, and Quiet of the Species, in any tolerable degree[b]: on which account the Earth is repreſented as lying under an extraordinary *Curſe*, of Barrenneſs, which has been generally thought to have continued, and receiv'd conſiderable addition at the *Deluge*; and very philoſophical Reaſons were aſſign'd for this Opinion[c]; till of late a learned Prelate[d] ſhew'd us, from the Circumſtances of the Hiſtory, that the direct contrary was fact. For ſome time after, the Longevity of Mankind was very neceſſary, for peopling the World, and learning Arts[e]; though I ſhould think it difficult to point out the Natural Cauſes of this Longevity, and the following Change; at leaſt,

[a] *Gen.* 2. 15.

[b] See *King*'s Origin of Evil, p. 192. Note 33. 3 Edit. and the Authors there referr'd to. To which add *Worthington*'s Eſſay on *Man's Redemption*, who has treated this point more particularly, p. 64, &c.

[c] See them collected in the *Univerſal Hiſt.* Vol. 1. p. 106, &c.

[d] Bp. *Sherlock*, Uſe and Intent of Proph. Diſc. 4. comp. Mr. *Worthington* on the ſame Subject, Eſſ. p. 84, &c.

[e] See *Hakewill*, p. 42. *Joſeph.* L. 1. c. 3. *Winder*, p. 78, 79.

ſuch

ſuch as can be conſiſtent with the fore-mention'd opinion [f]. Since, if the Earth was corrupted to ſuch a degree at the univerſal Deluge, and the Period of Human Life thereby ſo much ſhortned; this effect, one would imagine, ſhould have been moſt evident, while theſe ſame Cauſes muſt be freſh, and operate moſt ſtrongly: not to repeat that this ſuppoſed Corruption is a vulgar Error. This great Change therefore, ſeems to have been owing to a poſitive Appointment of the Deity, diſtinct from, and ſubſequent to that of *Noah*'s Flood, and introduced for Reaſons which took place ſome Ages after it; and may be conceiv'd as a *New Diſpenſation*, neceſſary for the future Government of the World, in every age [g]. However, ſo early

[f] V. *Cleric* in *Gen.* 5. 27. et *Buddei* Hiſt. Eccl. Vol. 1. p. 151. Mr. *Worthington* ſuppoſes a Decay in the Conſtitution of *Noah*'s Sons immediately occaſion'd by the Rains and Waters of the Deluge, Eſſ. p. 74, &c.

[g] 'After the Flood, God made a ſudden alteration in 'the Length of Mens Days: for perceiving the general 'Iniquity to encreaſe again, and thereupon deſigning to 'make an alteration in the World's continuance, he 'haſten'd the Period of Human Life, that the number 'of Souls he intended to ſend into the World, before the 'final Conſummation of all things, might have a ſpeedier 'Probation.' [*Stackhouſe* B. of Div. p. 309. 1ſt Edit.] — 'and that Death being brought nearer to their view, 'might draw off their attachment from this World, and 'induce them to place it upon another, which, at the

'diſtance

as *Moſes*'s days *, we find the Life of Man fix'd to the ſame length in general that it has at preſent; (for his Deſcription of it ſeems not capable of being wholly reſtrain'd to the particular Caſe at that time in the Wilderneſs) and ever ſince, ſo far as the Accounts of ancient

'diſtance of ſo many hundreds of years, it had little power 'to effect.' *Worthington* Eſſ. p. 73. 'Sin brought Death 'in firſt, and yet Man lived almoſt a thouſand years. But 'he ſinned more, and then Death came nearer to him: 'for when all the World was firſt drowned in Wicked-'neſs, and then in Water, God cut him ſhorter by one 'half; and five hundred years was his ordinary Period. 'And Man ſinned ſtill, and had ſtrange Imaginations, and 'built Towers in the Air; and then about *Peleg*'s Time, 'God cut him ſhorter by one half yet, two hundred and 'odd years was his determination. And yet the Genera-'tions of the World returned not unanimouſly to God; 'and God cut him off another half yet, and reduced him 'to a hundred and twenty years. And by *Moſes*'s Time 'one half of the final remanent Portion was pared away, 'reducing him to threeſcore years and ten.—But if God 'had gone on ſtill in the ſame method, and ſhorten'd our 'Days as we multiplied our Sins, we ſhould have been 'but as an *Ephemeron*; Man ſhould have lived the Life 'of a Fly, or a Gourd.—But God ſeeing *Man's Thoughts 'were only evil continually*, he was reſolved *no longer ſo to 'ſtrive with him*, nor deſtroy the *Kind*, but puniſh *Indi-'viduals* only, and ſingle Perſons; and if they ſinned, or 'if they did obey, regularly their Life ſhould be propor-'tionable.' *Taylor*, Life of *Chriſt*, p. 305.

* *Pſ.* 90. 10. If *Moſes* be the Author of that Pſalm, as its Title ſets forth.

Times

Times can be rely'd on, we have reaſon to believe, that the Conſtitution of Mankind in general, as well as the State of the Earth, and Heavens, whereon that muſt depend, have at all times been much the ſame as we now find them [h]; and may reſt ſatisfied, that the original Promiſe, has been, and will amply be made good, that *while the Earth remaineth, Seed-time and Harveſt, and Cold and Heat, and Summer and Winter, and Day and Night, ſhall not ceaſe* *; and therefore may conclude, that the Diſtribution, and Enjoyment of, what I call, the *Natural Advantages* of Life, is ſo far from a conſtant gradual Decline, that theſe have been at all times in themſelves pretty equal; and rather improving, as they receive aſſiſtance, which they do very much, from the *acquired* ones; which we are in the next place to conſider.

[h] See Sir *W. Temple*'s Works, V. 1. p. 276, &c. Sir *T. P. Blount*, Eſſ. 4. p. 188. 192, &c. or Ld. *Bacon*'s Hiſt. of Life and Death. That the *Stature* of Man in this Age is the ſame as it was near three thouſand years ago, appears from *Greaves*'s account of the Monument in the *Egyptian* Pyramid. *Derham.* Phyſ. Theol. B. 5. c. 4. N. 4. That we have had ſeveral very late inſtances of Perſons whoſe Longevity exceeded that of the *Patriarchal* Age, may be ſeen in *Worthington*'s Eſſay, p. 417. comp. *Huet.* Alnetan. Quæſt. L. 2. c. 12. S. 4.

* *Gen.* 8. 22.

The

The late Invention of *Arts* and *Sciences* is uſually inſiſted on, and very juſtly, in our Diſputes with *Atheiſts*, againſt the *Eternity* of the Word; and their continual *Progreſs*, though perhaps ſeldom attended to, ſeems to be a Point no leſs neceſſary to complete the Argument. For if it can be ſhewn, either that theſe which we now have, or others of equal Uſe and Importance, were diſcover'd ſooner, and dropt again, and ſubject to their ſeveral Revolutions; why ſhould not we grant from *Analogy*, that the World itſelf has undergone the like? that the ſame *Time*, and *Chance* has happen'd to all Things concerning it, and its Inhabitants? But that there actually have been ſuch Viciſſitudes in Nature, or ſo much as one valuable Art, or uſeful Branch of Science, wholly loſt ſince the Creation, I know no Ground ſufficient to believe.[a] In a Hiſtory of the

[a] For Proof of this ſee the pretended Inſtances of loſt Arts in *Pancirollus*, which upon Examination will appear all to be either manifeſtly falſe or frivolous, or of ſuch Trifles as have been dropt by Diſuſe: to which may be added *Wotton*'s Pref. to Reflect. on Ancient and Modern Learning. 'I will agree—that ſeveral Arts in the World 'have been loſt, and others after a Time again revived; 'but then theſe have been ſuch Arts as have been more 'curious than uſeful, and have rather been ornamental 'than beneficial to Mankind: and there has been ſome 'good

World, which has been prov'd by a late unexceptionable Writer, [b] to be of all others by far the moſt ancient and authentic, and which carries its Accounts as high as either could be wiſh'd, or hoped for, from Hiſtory; even to the forming and firſt peopling of the World itſelf, and the original Diviſion of the Nations; in this, we have the Birth and Genealogy, the Names and Characters, of the Founders of

'good reaſon to be given of their Diſuſe; either by their 'growing out of Faſhion, or by ſome more eaſy and com-'modious Invention. Thus the Art of *Glaſs-painting* was 'loſt about the Time of the Reformation, * when the 'Images of Saints were not ſo highly eſteem'd, and 'Churches began to be more gravely adorned. Thus the 'Uſe of *Archers* in an Army, has been laid aſide ſince the 'Invention of Pikes and Guns. But who can imagine 'that the Art of the Smith and the Carpenter ſhould 'ever be forgot after the firſt Invention; unleſs we could 'ſuppoſe that Houſes and all ſorts of Utenſils and Con-'veniences ſhould grow out of Faſhion, and it would be 'the Mode for Men to live like Colts and Wild Aſſes? 'Unleſs Men could be ſuppoſed to forget the Uſe of eat-'ing and drinking, I am confident they could never for-'get the Art of Ploughing and Sowing, and preſſing the 'Grape.' *Nicholls*'s Conf. Part. 1. p. 86. 1ſt Ed. See more 'of this in *Wotton*'s Pref. p. 14, *&c.* 2d Edit.

[b] Sir *J. Newton.* Chronol. of Ancient Kingdoms.

* This ſeems to be a vulgar Error. See *Glaſs-painting* in *Chambers*'s *Cyclopedia*, or *Spectacle de la Nature*, V. 3. p. 219. of *Cement*. ib. p. 228. add *Motte*'s Abr. of Phil. Tranſ. V. 2. Part. 4. p. 62, 63.

States and Kingdoms, as well as the Inventors even of manual Arts, deliver'd down; [a] and from the very air of Truth, and that Simplicity which runs through the whole relation, have much more reaſon to depend upon it, than on the fabulous Antiquities of *Greece* and *Egypt*; as the ſame excellent Author has demonſtrated. From whom we learn, that neither the planting of the World, nor the Introduction of Arts

[a] *Cain builded a City*, or the firſt City. *Geneſ.* 4. 17. add *Gen.* 10. 8, 9, *&c. Jabal was the Father of ſuch as dwell in Tents and ſuch as have Cattle, and his Brother's Name was Jubal; he was the Father of all ſuch as handle the Harp and the Organ, and Tubal Cain was an Inſtructor of every Artificer in Braſs and Iron*; or a Forger of *Arms*. *Gen.* 4. 20, *&c.* After the *Flood*, we are told that *Noah began to be an Huſbandman, and he planted a Vineyard*; Gen. 9. 20. which by his being ſurpriſed in ſuch a manner with the Effects of its Fruit, ſeems to have been the firſt of the kind. So late as *Abraham*'s time, we find there was enough of the beſt Land unoccupied for both him and *Lot* to chuſe out of, *Gen.* 13. 9. which (as the Author of *Bibliotheca Biblica* obſerves, p. 335.) is a moſt illuſtrious Teſtimony for the late peopling of the World, and by conſequence for the Truth of the *Moſaic* Hiſtory of the Creation and Deluge; in as much as it appears by this, that the moſt pleaſant and moſt fruitful Country of the whole Earth, and which in a few hundreds of Years afterward was ſo exceeding populous, was yet in the Days of *Abraham* ſo very thinly peopled, that even large Tracts of Ground were left in a manner uncultivated and without Proprietor.

and

and Sciences, were of ſo early a Date, as they have uſually been repreſented.[b] Moſt Nations, like private Families, have at all times been unaccountably fond of carrying up their Pedigree as high as poſſible; and where no marks remain'd of the ſucceſſive Alterations in their State, were apt to imagine that it had always been the ſame. Hence the many fooliſh Pretences among the Ancients, to their being *Aborigines* of the Countries they had inhabited

[b] 'Though *Noah* and his Sons had doubtleſs ſome 'Knowledge of the Inventions of the Antediluvians, and 'probably acquainted their Deſcendants with ſuch of 'them as were moſt obvious and uſeful in common Life, 'yet it is not to be imagined that any of the more curious Arts, or ſpeculative Sciences, were improved in any 'degree, ſuppoſing them to have been known or invented, till ſome conſiderable time after the Diſperſion.— 'For on their ſettling in any Country, they found it imployment ſufficient to cultivate the Land (which yet for 'want of ſeparate Property, and Security in their Poſſeſſions, in thoſe early Times, they improved no farther 'than barely to ſupply their Neceſſities) and to provide 'themſelves Habitations and Neceſſaries, for their mutual comfort and ſubſiſtence.* Beſides this, they were 'often obliged to remove from one place to another, 'where they could more conveniently reſide; and it was 'a great while before they came to embody themſelves 'together in Towns and Cities, and from thence to ſpread 'into Provinces, and to ſettle the Bounds and Extent of

 'their

* Vid. *Thucid.* L. 1. ſub. in.

Time out of Mind: hence were they led to make their ſeveral *Gods* the Founders of their Government. [c] They knew but very little of the World, and the Tradition which they had of that little, was ſo far blended with Fiction and Romance, that it ſerv'd only to confound them. [d] Upon the Removal of this Cloud, by the more faithful, diligent, and accurate Enquiry of the Moderns, we ſee Hiſtory beginning to clear up, even at this diſtance; the World puts on a very different Face; and all parts of it appear conformable to each other, and to the late, well known Courſe of Things. We find the *Marvellous* in all their Annals, and more eſpecially in the great Point of their Antiquity,

' their Territories. † Two or three Ages at leaſt muſt ' have been ſpent in this manner; and it is not very like- ' ly they ſhould amuſe themſelves with celeſtial Obſerva- ' tions in particular, when they had ſo many more preſ- ' ſing affairs to mind.' *Univerſ. Hiſt.* B. 1. c. 2. p. 173.

† *Stillingfleet.* Or. S. B. 1. c. 1. S. 16.

[c] Datur hæc venia Antiquitati ut miſcendo humana Divinis Primordia Urbium auguſtiora faciat; ſays *Liv.* Pref. Hiſt. L. 1. very honeſtly.

[d] The Grounds of the Uncertainty of Ancient Hiſtory, may be ſeen in *Stillingfleet*, Or. Sac. B. 1. c. 1. S. 16. 18, *&c.* Of the *Egyptian* in particular, ſee Dr. *Shaw's* Travels p. 442. comp. *Baker* on Hiſt. and Chronol. Reflections, c. 10, and 11. *Shuckford*, V. 2. B. 8. *Winder*, V. 2. c. 10. S. 4, *&c.*

exceeding-

exceedingly reduced; [dd] and our own plain Accounts ſtill more and more confirmed: from which we may be convinc'd, that both the peopling, and cultivating of the Earth aroſe at firſt from a few, low Beginnings, and very gradually ſpread itſelf; and that it has at all Times proceeded by pretty near the ſame ſlow, regular Steps it does at preſent. Since we have

[dd] 'Till Men come to a Scrutiny, they are very apt 'to imagine that a Number is vaſtly greater than it is. 'I have often aſked People to gueſs how many Men there 'have been in a direct Line between the preſent King of 'England and *Adam*, meaning only one Man in a Gene-'ration; the King's Father, Grandfather, *&c.* The An-'ſwer made upon a ſudden Conjecture, has always been, '*ſome Thouſands*; whereas it is evident from a Calcula-'tion, there have not been two hundred. For the ſpace 'of Time between *Adam* and *Chriſt*, let us take the Ge-'nealogy of our Saviour preſerved by St. *Luke*, in which 'the Names between *Adam* and *Chriſt*, excluſive of both, 'are but ſeventy four. From the Birth of *Chriſt* to the 'Birth of the King were ſixteen hundred and eighty 'Years. Let it be ſuppoſed, that in the Liſt of the King's 'Progenitors, every Son was born when his Father was 'twenty-five Years old, which is as early as can be ſup-'poſed, one with another. According to this Suppoſiti-'on, there were four Generations in every hundred years: '*i. e.* in thoſe ſixteen hundred and eighty-three Years 'there were ſixty-ſeven Generations; which ſixty-ſeven, 'added to the foregoing ſeventy-four, will make no more 'than a hundred and forty one.' *Hallett.* on *Heb.* 11. 7. Not. a. p. 17.

look'd into paſt Times more narrowly, we prove the Ancients far from being ſo expert, and knowing, as by a ſuperſtitious reverence for every Thing remote, we once were accuſtom'd to ſuppoſe: And as well from the preſent State of thoſe particular Nations which uſed to brag moſt of their extraordinary Advancement, and long poſſeſſion of the Sciences, as from the Remains of their Forefathers Skill, when fairly [ee]

[ee] It may indeed be imagin'd from the great Extent of ſome ancient Cities, ſuch as *Thebes*, *Nineveh*, *Babylon*, as well as from the enormous Size of ſeveral publick Works in thoſe Parts, that Arts have once been in much greater Perfection than they now appear in the World; but upon ſecond Thoughts, I fancy it will be found that this was rather owing to an unnatural gigantic Taſte, which then prevail'd (as Dr. *Winder* obſerves, H. of K. v. 2. p. 334.) in their Architecture, Statuary and other Arts, as well as in their Frame of Government and Politicks, than to any real Improvement in either of theſe; as may be gather'd from the vaſt numbers of Men uſually employ'd on each Occaſion; which is a Sign that Inſtruments of Expedition and Convenience were not had in the former Caſe, ib. p. 321. and that the Means of living comfortably at home were no leſs wanting in the latter, which might be the Occaſion of ſo many ſerving abroad in Wars, and made the ancient Armies ſo very numerous as they are commonly repreſented. ib. p. 323. This Notion is confirm'd from obſerving the like monſtrous Undertakings carried on entirely by the Labour of Multitudes in Countrys where there could be no Room for our ſuſpecting any extraordinary ſkill, viz. *Mexico* and *China*.

repre-

repreſented, we find no great Reaſon to envy them their beſt Acquirements; ſo far I mean as concerns real Uſe; for all the Worth that Faſhion and Fancy may give Things, is out of the queſtion. * Some of them indeed deſcribe their Knowledge in high Strains; and perhaps for their Times, and in Compariſon with ſome of their Neighbours, it may have been conſiderable; and yet 'tis more than probable that ſuch Accounts are chiefly owing to their Ignorance of the true State of the reſt of Mankind; as is the caſe remarkably with the *Chineſe*, a People ſo much celebrated by themſelves, and others; who yet, upon more ſtrict Examination, have appear'd in moſt Things of Conſequence, and where moſt might have been expected, leaſt to deſerve a Character: So that nothing but their as ſmall Acquaintance with the *Europeans* formerly, as ours with them, could poſſibly give riſe to thoſe extravagant Sentiments, and Sayings that are recorded of each other.[e] The ſame may in a great meaſure

* Why the Sciences of Mens Brains have been more ſubject to Viciſſitudes than the Arts of their Hands, See *Sprat*'s Hiſt. *R. S.* p. 118, *&c.* 3 Ed.

[e] See the 1ſt Part p. 36. to which may be added *Jenkin*, V. 1. p. 340, *&c.* *Wotton*'s and *Baker*'s Reflections, under the Heads *Phyſic* and *Aſtronomy*. Theſe and many other

be affirm'd of the *Egyptian* Learning.[f] Though this Country has been ſtiled the Mother of

Authors ſhew us how little able they were to make any proper Obſervations in their ſo much boaſted Science of the Heavens, till ſhewn the Way of late by Miſſionaries: as alſo how monſtrouſly inaccurate were both their Chronological and Aſtronomical Tables. *Pere Du Halde*, their Panegyriſt, ſays, they have applied themſelves from the Beginning of their Empire to *Aſtronomy*; yet when he comes to explain himſelf, all their Study appears to be a little, low, judicial *Aſtrology*, V. 1. Fol. *Eng.* p. 394. So ignorant were they in *Geography*, that their Literati ſeeing a Map of the World in the Hands of the *Jeſuits*, took that one of the two Hemiſpheres, which contain'd *Europe*, *Aſia* and *Africa*, for the Empire of *China*, p. 280. Some of their curious Notions in Religion may be ſeen, p. 254. 652. 655. 657. Their Skill in *Metaphyſics* has been touch'd upon by Mr. *Gurdon*. B. Lect. S. 14. p. 425, *&c.* Their *Mechanics* may be judg'd of from the *Jeſuits* Account of their taking the firſt Watch he brought thither for a living Creature. *Boyle* on Final Cauſes, p. 230. Their Method of communicating any Science, from their yet being without any *Alphabet*; as is obſerv'd by the Author of *Div. Leg.* V. 2. p. 79. Some Specimens of their *Morals* may be ſeen in *Anſon*'s Voyage, p. 398. 4to. Of their *Government*, ib. B. 3. c. 10.

[f] 'The Truth is, there want not Grounds of Suſpici-
'on that the old *Egyptian* Learning was not of that Ele-
'vation which the preſent Diſtance of our Age makes us
'apt to think it was: and a learned Man hath in a ſet
'Diſcourſe endeavoured to ſhew the great Defects that
'there were in it. * Neither can it, I think, be deny'd,
'but according to the Reports we have now concerning
'it,

* *Conring.* de Herm. Med. c. 19. 11, 12.

Arts,[g] as well as Miſtreſs of Religion;[h] and was, no doubt, as early poliſhed as moſt: yet if we be allow'd to judge of her Improvement in other parts of Science from that moſt concerning one, and that which therefore in all reaſon ſhould have been moſt cultivated, I mean *Medicine*, of which ſhe alſo claims the firſt Invention;[i] we ſhall not have much room to marvel at her high Advances. —— 'It muſt 'evidently appear, ſays a very learned Writer, 'that the *Egyptians* could have no ſuch Phy-'ſicians in the Days of *Moſes* as *Diodorus* and '*Herodotus* ſeem to ſuppoſe: it is much more 'probable that Ages after theſe Times they 'were, like the *Babylonians*, entirely deſtitute 'of perſons ſkilful in curing any Diſeaſes that 'might happen amongſt them; and that the 'beſt Method they could think of, after con-'ſulting their Oracles, was when any one was 'ſick, they took care to have as many perſons

'it, ſome parts of their Learning were frivolous, a great 'deal magical, and the reſt ſhort of that Improvement 'which the acceſſion of the parts and induſtry of after-'ages gave unto it.' *Stillingfleet.* Or. S. B. c. 2. p. 81. 'add *Wotton*'s Reflections, c. 9. and Sir *T. P. Blount*'s Eſſ. 4. p. 153, &c.

[g] *Macrob.* Sat. L. 1. 15.

[h] Id. L. 7. c. 13. et Ammian. Marc. L. 22.

[i] *Plin.* N. H. L. 7. c. 56.

'ſee

'ſee and ſpeak to him as poſſibly could, that 'if any one who ſaw the ſick perſon, had had 'the like Diſtemper, he might ſay what was 'proper to be done in that Condition.'[k] From

[k] Dr. *Shuckford.* Connect. B. 9. p. 367. *Babylonii* (teſte *Herodot.* L. 1. et *Strab.* G. L. 16.) languentes in forum efferebant, ut viri qui eos adirent conſulerent hortarenturque ad ea quæ ipſi faciendo effugiſſent ſimilem morbum, aut alium noviſſent effugiſſe.—Idem factitabant *Luſitani* et *Egyptii. P. Virg.* de Inv. Rer. L. 1. c. 20. Conf. *Strab.* G. L. 3. et *Plutarch.* de Occult. Vivend. That the ſame was done in other Countries, ſee *Harle*'s Hiſt. Eſſay on the State of Phyſ. in the *O. T.* p. 4. 'The *Egyptian* Prac-'tiſe of Phyſic depended much on Aſtrological and Ma-'gical Grounds, either the Influence of ſome particular 'Planet, or ſome Tutelar Dæmon were ſtill conſider'd; '[*Wotton*, p. 119.] which precarious foundation muſt 'needs depreciate their Skill, and ſtop any increaſe of 'Knowledge which might be made on other Principles.' *Univerſ. Hiſt.* V. 1. p. 219. Αιγυπτιοι λεγυσι ὅτι αρα τα ανθρωπα το σωμα εξ καὶ τριακονλα διειληφοῖες δαιμονες, ἢ θεοι τινες αιθεριοι, εις τοσαυλα μερη νενεμημενον —— αλλ' αλλο τι αὐλα νεμειν επιτεταχλαι —— και δη επικαλεῦλες εαυλες ἰωνλαι των μερων τα παθηματα. *Celſ.* ap. *Orig.* L. 8. p. 416. Ed. Cant. Nor was the Method which they are ſaid to have taken of eſtabliſhing its Rules by Law [*Diod. Sic.* L. 1. 74. *Shuckford*, B. 9. p. 362. *Chandler*, Vind. of O. T. Part. 2. p. 442.] like to make any great Progreſs in the Science. That *Surgery* was by much the oldeſt Branch of *Phyſic*, and that this Art in general made but very ſlow advances till, after ſome ages ſpent in collecting Obſervations, it came to the heigth of Reputation

which ſingle inſtance of the State of this moſt neceſſary Art, in thoſe Times and Places, as well as its firſt Rudiments, in like manner deſcribed by an able Judge[1], we may, I think,

tation under *Hippocrates* [where it ſtood many Ages more, and where as a *Science* ſome ſay it ſtands yet] ſee Dr. *Drake*'s Notes to *Le Clerk*. Hiſt. Phyſ. Part 1. B. 1. c. 17, &c. A tolerable account of the ancient State of Phyſic may be ſeen in a Note to p. 85. of Dr. *Young*'s Hiſt. Diſſ. V. 2. Add *Harle*'s Eſſ. p. 80, &c. or *Barchuſen* de Medicinæ Orig. & Progreſſ. Diſſert. 1. & 18. D. *Le Clerk*'s Hiſt. Phyſ. paſſ.

[1] *Celſus* Inventionem Artis ſcienter ponit, L. 1. ſcribens. " Sæpe cauſa apparet utpote Lippitudinis, Vulneris, ne- " que ex his patet Medicina: quod ſi ſcientiam non ſub- " jicit evidens cauſa, multo minus ea poteſt ſubjicere " quæ in dubio eſt. Cum igitur illa incerta incomprehen- " ſibiliſque ſit, a certis potius & exploratis petendum eſt " præſidium, id eſt ab his quae in ipſis curationibus *Ex-* " *perientia* docuit, ſicut in cæteris omnibus artibus. Nam " ne agricolam quidem aut gubernatorem diſputatione, " ſed *uſu* fieri liquet. Aſt iſtæ cogitationes nihil ad me- " dicinam pertinent, cum de his rebus qui diverſa ſenſe- " runt non ab obſcuris cauſis, neque a naturalibus actio- " nibus, ſed ab *Experimentis*, prout cuique reſponderant " in perducendo homines in eandem ſanitatem, medendi " vias traxerint. Notarunt enim ægrorum qui ſine medi- " cis erant, alios propter aviditatem primis diebus cibum " protinus ſumpſiſſe, alios propter faſtidium abſtinuiſſe; " & levatum magis morbum eorum qui abſtinuiſſent: " itemque alios in ipſa Febre aliquid ediſſe, alios paulo " ante eam, alios poſt remiſſionem ejus; & optime iis " ceſſiſſe qui poſt finem Febris id feciſſent. Eadem ratione " alios

be pretty well ſatisfied in what Condition the reſt then were, in other parts of the World; as

" alios inter principia ſtatim uſos eſſe cibo pleniore, alios " exiguo, & graviores eos factos qui ſe impleviſſent. Hæc " ſimiliaque cum quotidie inciderent, diligentes homines " talia animadvertentes ad extremum perceperunt quæ " ægrotantibus utilia forent. Sic Medicinam ortam inter " omnes conſtat." *C. Celſ.* ap. *Pol. Virg.* de *R. I.* L. 1. " c. 20. comp. *Quintil.* L. 2. c. 18. Add *Wotton.* Reſl. c. 26. p. 341, &c. 2d Ed. *Max. Tyr.* Diſſ. 40. 234. *Barchuſen.* Diſſert. 1. 3. p. 11, &c. ' How ſimple the begin-' nings of this Art were, may be obſerv'd by the Story or ' Tradition of *Æſculapius* going about the Country with ' a Dog, and the Goat always following him; both which ' he uſed much in his Cures; the firſt for licking all ul-' cered wounds, and Goats-milk for Diſeaſes of the Sto-' mach and Lungs. We find little more recorded of either ' his Methods or Medicines; tho' he was ſo ſucceſsful by ' his Skill, or ſo admired for the Novelty of his Profeſſion, ' as to have been honoured with Statues, eſteemed Son of ' *Apollo*, and worſhipped as a God.' *Temple*'s Works, V. 1. p. 280. This Obſervation ſeems to come with ſome weight from ſo profeſs'd an Admirer of all that relates to the *Ancients*. To which we may add, that the very Notion of a *God of Phyſick*, with his ſeveral Temples and their Apparatus, will demonſtrate the low ſtate in which that Art muſt be, ſince his Prieſts and Practitioners, who were to keep up his Credit by performing now and then ſomething extraordinary, if they cou'd have done many real Cures, wou'd never have needed to recur to ſo much Superſtition, Artifice, and Juggle, as was practis'd all along while ſuch a Notion ſubſiſted. V. *Le Clerc* on *Æſculapius* Hiſt. P. c. 28, &c. of their *Anatomy*, ib. 104. 125. of *Chymiſtry*, p. 146.

alſo

alſo of their gradual Improvement ſince in all reſpects[m]. Many are indeed carried on much faſter in ſome Countries than in others; and ſome now and then are ſoon brought to ſo great Perfection in one Country, as to ſeem almoſt incapable of any increaſe, for ſeveral Ages; which proves againſt an exact, equable Improvement under each Period, and in each particular, which never was contended for; but is no Argument againſt Improvement in general; much leſs, any Evidence that theſe grow daily worſe: and notwithſtanding this, or other Limitations which might be admitted, yet from ſome of the great out-lines (as we may ſay) of Nature, from plain Appearances, in many remarkable Æras, and moſt conſiderable Events, we ſeem to have ſtill ground ſufficient to conclude, that on the whole, they are, and always have been, in the main, *progreſſive*.

Now this Progreſs in *Arts*, will neceſſarily bring with it a proportionable Improvement of all the other Natural Advantages; as Health, Strength, Plenty, and Politeneſs: each of them tend in ſome reſpect or other to improve and adorn the Face of Nature, and lead us to apply its Laws to our reſpective Uſes, much more effectually, than could be obtain'd without them.

[m] See *Nicholls*'s Conf. Part 1. p. 81, 82. 1ſt Ed.

By

By them we are enabled to reap its ſeveral Benefits in ways more eaſy, and compendious, with leſs time, labour, and expence; the World is ſtock'd more plentifully with Inhabitants, and each of them ſupported in a way more elegant, and advantageous to itſelf, and all around it. In ſhort, every thing in Life becomes more comfortable, and commodious; and Life itſelf may be ſaid to attain a longer Date, by means of both a better, and more early Education [n]. That this has been the caſe in later Ages, ſeems too clear to be deny'd by any, who will be at the leaſt trouble to compare them with the moſt

[n] 'There is a ſenſe in which theſe latter Generations 'in general have the advantage of the Ancients, and in 'which they may be ſaid to out-live them — *viz.* in that 'they live more in leſs time. It is a common Obſervation 'that Children ripen and become Men ſooner in theſe 'latter Ages than formerly they did. — Notwithſtanding 'our prejudices in other reſpects, we eſteem ſo well of 'ourſelves in this, that we think we are more knowing 'in every Science and Profeſſion of Life, and more capable of Buſineſs than our Anceſtors, not far backwards 'were at double our Age. And in confirmation hereof 'ſome traces in Scripture may be obſerved, whereby it 'appears, that the State of Childhood continued much 'longer in the Infancy of the World than at preſent; and 'ſeem'd to bear proportion to the greater length of Men's 'Lives. And the ſame is obſerved by Heathen Authors.' *Worth.* Eſſay, p. 422, 423.

extra-

extravagant account of former ones[o]. 'Tis no great Compliment to the preſent times to ſay we are improved in every manual Art, as well as thoſe of Government[p], the ſocial ones, and

[o] — 'When Men began to unite into Societies, to 'cloath themſelves, and build Cottages, and apply them-'ſelves to Agriculture, the Perſons who fell upon the firſt 'hints of theſe rude Contrivances, were eſteem'd ſuch 'mighty Benefactors to Mankind, that they could never 'ſufficiently expreſs their Gratitude to them. Hence they 'were made immortal, and Divine Honours were paid to 'them; and hence it is well known, aroſe the Godſhip of '*Jupiter*, *Bacchus*, *Minerva*, *Ceres*, and the reſt of that 'Tribe of Deities: But there is not a *Plough-boy* now, 'that would not have been a God, even to *Jupiter* him-'ſelf; had he lived in his Days, with his preſent Skill in 'Huſbandry.' "Had the Myſtery of Printing been in-"vented in ancient Times, *Guttenberg* of *Mentz* might "have been a God of higher eſteem throughout *Germany*, "than *Mercury* or *Jupiter* himſelf." [*Worthington*'s Eſſay, p. 169.] which we cannot think improbable, ſince his aſſiſtant *Fuſt*, or *Fauſt*, attain'd the Title of *Conjurer* for it, in ſo late times, and ſuch a Place as *Paris*.

[p] The Modern Governments are better calculated for the general good of the governed, which is now known to be the only end of Government, than the Ancient ones were. That horrid Spirit of Heroiſm, and Deſire of Conqueſt, ſeems to be pretty well extinguiſh'd: and 'if at 'preſent there are fewer Revolutions in Chriſtendom, 'tis 'becauſe the Principles of ſound Morality are more uni-'verſally known; Men are leſs ſavage and fierce, and 'their Underſtanding is better cultivated; and perhaps 'all this is owing to Men of Learning, who have poliſh-

'ed

even our very Amuſements[q]; the thing ſhews itſelf every where; and 'tis no leſs plain *a priori*, that it muſt be ſo. If, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſays, * *One Day telleth another, and one Night certifieth another:* if, according to the Prophet, † *many run to and fro*, (travel by Sea and Land) and thereby *Knowledge* is *increaſed*; if by repeated Obſervation, and Experience, the World grow (as it does unavoidably) in any reſpect more perfect; this will, by that affinity, and union long ſince obſerv'd between the parts of Science[r], derive Perfection on each Siſter Art. The ſame effect will, in a good meaſure, follow, if the World be but ſuppoſed to continue in the ſame natural State in which it was created, and the

'ed *Europe*.' Exam. of *Machiavel*'s Prince, p. 18, 19. Add Mr. *Worthington*'s Obſervations on this Subject. *Eſſ.* c. 8. p. 173, &c.

[q] See *Worth. Eſſ.* p. 201.

* *Pſal.* 19. 2. † *Dan.* 12. 4.

[r] Omnes Artes quae ad Humanitatem pertinent, habent quoddam commune vinculum, & quaſi cognatione quadam inter ſe continentur. *Cic.* pro *Arch. P.* Id. de *Or.* L. 3. Eſt illa *Platonis* vera — vox, omnem Doctrinam harum ingenuarum & humanarum artium uno quodam ſocietatis vinculo contineri. Ubi enim perfecta vis eſt Rationis ejus qua cauſæ rerum atque exitus cognoſcuntur, mirus quidam omnium quaſi conſenſus Doctrinarum concentuſque reperitur. It would be mere impertinence to bring Inſtances in proof of this.

Genius

Genius of Mankind keep where it was originally; nay this muſt be the Caſe, if both do not grow worſe, and in a very great Degree; much greater than has ever been pretended. But as this Point can be no longer call'd in Queſtion than till the Matter is duly ſtated, we have not ſo much occaſion to give a direct Proof of it, by deſcending to Particulars, (which indeed would be infinite, and moſt of which appear too obvious to need naming[p],) as to point out, what is more material, and perhaps leſs taken notice of, the farther Connection which this *Progreſs of Arts* has with our *Religious Knowledge*, of each kind.

By Religion in general, I mean the way of promoting our moſt perfect Happineſs upon the whole, in this Life; as well as qualifying us for, and by particularly recommending ourſelves to the Divine Favour, entitling us to higher Degrees of it in the next. Now the Knowledge of this, whether natural or reveal'd, will appear to have held pace in general with all other Knowledge, from the beginning, and

[p] The Reader may ſee a Liſt of them in *Pancirollus*, de Nov. Repert. as alſo in *Edwards*, *Glanvill*, *Wotton*, Sir *T. P. Blount*, *Perault*, *Sprat's Hiſt. R. S.* and others, who have appear'd for the *Moderns*, as I think, with great Advantage in the late Controverſy on this Subject.

theſe three Branches of Science ſeem to have been, in the main, ſimilar and ſynchronous; as indeed they ought to be, or elſe perpetual Diſappointment, Miſery, and Confuſion would enſue; as was obſerv'd in part before.* The firſt Race of Men had as much Knowledge imparted to them, moſt probably by God himſelf, as they could either then want, or well be capable of; as much as they had either Means or leiſure to employ; and higher Notices, could they have been attended to, would we conceive rather have diſtracted, and render'd them uneaſy in their then ſituation, and tended to diſqualify them for their more immediate Occupations, in that part of Life. They were placed in a World capable of affording all Gratifications ſuited to their mortal Frame, and made for its Support; and were deſign'd to glorify their Maker's Goodneſs in the Enjoyment of them, for ſome time here; as well as to expect a reparation of its Decays, with farther and more full Manifeſtations of the ſame Goodneſs, ſomewhere hereafter. Their firſt Employ then was to learn the preſent Uſe, and Application of theſe natural Benefits themſelves, as well as to lay a foundation for communicating, and extending them to future Generations; which

* Part. I. p. 10, 11, 12.

were

were to inhabit the ſame Place, for many Ages. And accordingly, their Notions of the World, and of its Governour, and conſequent Opinions in Religion, both natural and poſitive, were ſuch as might be expected from Men in ſuch Circumſtances.* As to the latter, and more eſpecially that great Article of it which concern'd the Reſtauration of Human Nature, they had only a general, indeterminate Expectation of ſome Redeemer or other, who was ſometime to ariſe among them: [a] which yet was very ſufficient to keep up their Hopes, and ſecure a Truſt and Dependence on their Creator; eſpecially when revived by ſo many Earneſts of preſent, temporal Bleſſings: but when, or where, or upon what plan, that Redemption was to be work'd, they knew not; and perhaps it might be as unneceſſary to impart this fully to them, as it was probably above their Comprehenſion. To preſerve an Intercourſe with the Divine Being, it is likewiſe probable that they had poſitive Directions about conſecrating to

* What theſe Opinions might be is largely deſcribed by Dr. *Winder*, Hiſt. of Knowl. V. 1. c. 2. S. 2. though whether our firſt Parents *thought ſo clearly on the Subject*, as this Author, and *thoſe celebrated Moderns* he there mentions [p. 36.] I much queſtion.

[a] See Bp. *Sherlock*'s Uſe and Intent of Proph. S. 2. or Dr. *Winder*'s Hiſt. of Knowledge, p. 26, 27.

him a part of their Goods, together with the Times, and Places for preſenting this before him; by way of Acknowledgement of his preſent Bounty, and Application for the Continuance of it; and alſo in Deprecation of his Diſpleaſure, whenever they became ſenſible of having incurr'd it by abuſing them; and laſtly, as a ſettled, ſtated Means of always having Acceſs to him, and finding Acceptance with him. Hence was the Origin of *Sacrifices*,[b] as they are diſtinguiſh'd into *expiatory*, *euctical*, and *euchariſtical*; and this ſeems to have been the Subſtance of the primitive Religion; which was as plain, and ſimple as the Times.

When the Notions of Mankind grew more complex, Religion by degrees became ſo too, and ſpred itſelf, together with their other Notices; all which were in ſome meaſure ſupplemental, and ſubſidiary to it. Each new Degree of Knowledge, in each part of Nature, was a new Opening of the human Mind, ſtill more and more diſplaying the Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs, in the original Conſtitution of things, and Conſtruction of Animals; as well as in the conſtant regular Preſervation of each Species of

[b] See Part 2. p. 56. Note d. and p. 58, 59. Note a. c. with Dr. *Winder* on the Subject, p. 30.

them,

them, and pointing out their various Ends and Uſes; thereby enabling Man, to whom they were all ſubjected, to enter farther into this Conſtitution himſelf; as well by receiving the Benefits thereof more perfectly, as by reſembling his Creator in diſtributing the ſame more copiouſly; and both ways paying his moſt acceptable Tribute of Duty, and Devotion to the common Parent.

When the Lives of Men began to ſhorten, we find Arts increaſing much faſter in Proportion; as it was fit they ſhould, ſince otherwiſe many Diſcoveries would drop before they could be brought to any tolerable Perfection, or apply'd to uſe; there being then no other Repoſitory for ſuch, beſide the Memory of their Inventors: till at length came the Art of *Writing*, which drew along with it all the reſt; helping at once to ſpread, and to perpetuate them. And it is worth obſerving, as was juſt hinted before,* that about the ſame time, more frequent, and more full Revelations were communicated to the World, which thereby became better qualified to receive, keep, and convey them; as they were likewiſe diſpens'd in a way beſt ſuited to its own State; and which moſt

* Part 2. p. 158. add *Winder*. Hiſt. of Knowl. p. 221, 222.

effectually ſupply'd its Wants, and tended to give greater Light and Improvement to it, as well as one another: as may be ſeen particularly in Part. 2.

We have ſeen in ſome meaſure how the caſe ſtood both with Religion and Science, in the *Antediluvian* and *Patriarchal* Ages; and are ſufficiently acquainted with thoſe Alterations it receiv'd under the *Iſraelites*, and *Jews*; by various additional Inſtitutions, and a Succeſſion of Prophets: not very unlike to which was a Light held forth to the Eaſt, by their great Oracles, *Zoroaſter*, and *Confucius*; and to moſt Parts of the Weſt, by a long Series of their Philoſophers; as is obſerv'd in the ſame place.†

To theſe, in its proper Seaſon, ſucceeds *Chriſtianity*; of which there ſcarcely is Occaſion to remark, that it ſurpaſs'd them all, as much as the Times of its Promulgation were ſuperior, in all kinds of Knowledge, to the paſt; and which was evidently as great an Improvement upon *Natural* Religion properly ſo call'd, as it was upon any of the former Diſpenſations; and might, I think, with juſt as much Propriety, be term'd a bare Revival, or Republication of the one, as of the other. Though perhaps there may be ſome room to doubt whe-

† Ibid.

ther

ther even thoſe Ages, enlighten'd as they were above the former, were capable of receiving all the Improvement which it was fitted and deſign'd to give; whether the World was yet able to admit it, in its utmoſt Purity, and Perfection. On the contrary, there ſeem to have been ſo many Dregs of *Jewiſh* Superſtition, and *Gentile* Philoſophy, as required a long time to purge away; and from the one of which it had no ſooner got well clear, than it became immers'd, and clouded in the other.* Even in its early Days, we find it loaded with the Refuſe of each Syſtem, which was brought in to explain Myſteries, or rather make them, in the Goſpel: till by Degrees itſelf is made a Matter of high Speculation, and Refinement; and ſuch nice Diſputes† rais'd about the Natures of its Author, and the preciſe *Modus* of their Union; alſo concerning the abſtract Nature, and ſeparate Subſiſtence of the Human Soul, as ſerv'd, one of them to fill the Eaſtern Church with Blood and Deſolation, and at length ſubject it to the *Mahometan* Yoke, for which alone it ſeem'd at that time fitted;* the other, to introduce

* Part. 2. p. 169.

† See *Conſtantine's* excellent Letter on this Subject in *Euſeb. de Vit. Conſt.* c. 66, 67, &c.

* Part. 2. p. 175. Not. r.

the Doctrine of *Purgatory*, and with it a long Train of *Popiſh* Errors; which ended in a Weſtern Tyranny, no leſs ſevere, over both Soul and Body. Both theſe have indeed a long while oppreſs'd the *Chriſtian* World; and if they be altogether ſo bad as we have been uſed to eſteem them, are not at preſent eaſily accounted for: but we hope they may be found really not ſuch; [a] and that the ſame wiſe and

[a] Popery (ſays Mr. *Worthington* Eſſ. p. 156.) itſelf be-
'gins to be aſhamed of ſome of its groſſer Errors, and its
'Divines of late have been forced to explain them in a
'manner more agreeable to Truth and Scripture.' [and the ſame Thing may be obſerv'd of the *Mahometan* Doctors in their Comments upon the *Koran*, as appears remarkably all through *Sale*'s Notes] 'Moreover, that perſecut-
'ing Spirit which was the Reproach and Scandal of
'*Chriſtians*, is, God be praiſed, in a good meaſure abat-
'ed among all Sorts and Denominations of them; and
'we do not now hear ſo much of *Chriſtians* being burnt
'and tortured by *Chriſtians*. Nor do *Papiſts* at preſent
'ſeem to thirſt ſo much after *Proteſtant* Blood; though
'there is reaſon to ſuſpect that they ſtill retain too much
'of the old Leaven, durſt they ſuffer it to work out. It
'is obſerved likewiſe, that there is not that Ignorance
'and Immorality to be objected againſt the *Papiſts* now
'as formerly; Learning being no leſs propagated among
'them than *Proteſtants*: many good and pious Books are
'publiſhed by their Clergy; nor are they ſo ſcandalous
'in their Lives, as in the Ages preceding the Reformation;
'but they in general are exemplary in their Behaviour,
'and afford us Patterns in ſome things which we might
'pro-

good Ends will appear to be accompliſh'd by them, in due Time, either before or at their Expiration, as have been evident in moſt other Diſpenſations.[b]

However, at the next great Æra, which is, we think, juſtly ſtiled the *Reformation*, there appear'd ſufficient Tokens of this Progreſs in Knowledge, we have been maintaining; and theſe ſucceeding ſo faſt one upon another, that they cannot eſcape the ſlighteſt Obſervation.[c] Here the abovemention'd Branches of it are again united, and affording mutual Aſſiſtance, and Support to one another. Science of all kinds, Human and Divine, revives, and with it come new Methods of Communication; (or rather it riſes as much above the paſt, as theſe

'profit by.' The like has been obſerv'd of the *Mahometans* above.

[b] Of which ſee more in Part. 2. p. 175, and 181.

[c] See ſome of the Particulars in Part. 2. p. 182. and *Worthington*'s Account of the Progreſs of Learning after its Revival. Eſſay, p. 200, *&c.* To which we may add, that the Avenues to Learning of all kinds have been plan'd out and open'd by Ld. *Bacon*; the Nature and moſt intimate Receſſes of the Human Mind unfolded and explain'd by *Locke*; the Frame and Conſtitution of the Univerſe by *Newton*; (to name no other Writers of our own) in a more perfect Manner, than ever was done or attempted, ſince the Foundation of the World.

exceed

exceed all others before them) and ſince has been continuing to improve, and to draw with it all collateral Advantages, down to the preſent Times.

The more we ſtill know of human Nature, and become better vers'd in the Art of Living, (and who doubts but we do ſo daily?) the more enlarg'd, and adequate Notions muſt we have of natural Religion; and thereby be better able to judge of, and apply revealed: * the more acquainted we are with the Faculties of our own *Soul*, the better qualified muſt we be to regulate, and improve them; to direct the reaſoning Power, aſſiſt the Memory, refine the Imagination; in each of which Points very conſiderable Diſcoveries have been made of late: the more we know of the *Body*, the more able we are to preſcribe a Regimen, and remedy the ſeveral Diſorders of it: and (though it ſeems to be the Intent of Providence, for Reaſons obvious enough, that *Phyſic* in particular, ſhould not receive the ſame Degrees of Improvement with other Arts, yet) perhaps it would not be hard to prove, were this a place for it, that we are actually able to effect this, in a more perfect

* Vid. *Walchii* Orat. de Incrementis quæ noſtra ætate ſtudium Theologicum cepit; recitat. MDCCXXV.

manner

manner now than formerly; that 'tis rather our Obſervations on the Diſorders, and Defects in each of theſe that multiply, than the Diſorders and Defects themſelves; excepting ſome ſuch as probably ariſe, and propagate themſelves, from ſome particular, reigning Vices.[a]

The more we know of the *World*, the more we view its Order, Beauty, Symmetry; the uniform Laws which it is govern'd by; the juſt Arrangement, and mutual Subſerviency of all its Parts; (and I need not obſerve how much this kind of Learning has of late increas'd[b]) the more we ſee the Glory, and Perfection of its Architect; and are more fully ſa-

[a] If ſome new Diſtempers have ariſen of late, 'tis likely others of an older Date have ceas'd; as is obſerv'd by D. *Le Clerc*. 'Fuerunt ergo Morbi, nonnullorum Siderum 'inſtar, orti certo tempore, poſtea extincti ſunt; ſunt-'que alii, quos ortos quidem non ita pridem novimus, 'ſed quorum finem nondum videmus.' Diſſert. de Lepra *Moſaica*, p. 9. Several Inſtances occur in *Barchuſen*, de Medic. Orig. et Progr. Diſſ. 5. S. 6.

[b] Of this and the Benefit the World receives from it, ſee *Worthington* Eſſ. p. 94, &c. 'And if *Natural Philoſo-'phy* in all its parts by purſuing this Method ſhall at 'length be perfected, the bounds of *Moral Philoſophy* will 'alſo be enlarged.' *Newt.* Opt. B. 3. And that *ſupernatural* Light or Knowledge will be increas'd in the ſame way, its Hindrances being of the very ſame kind. See Bp. *Butler*'s Analogy, p. 262, &c. 2d Edition.

tisfied

tisfied that he deſign'd its ſeveral Inhabitants for Happineſs in general, and muſt approve of every regular, conſiſtent Method which they take to promote it.

Such Obſervations on this World, enable us likewiſe to argue from it to *another*; and conclude that that will probably go on in the like way, as conſiſting of the like Inhabitants, and conducted by the ſame Hand. As the preſent World has generally improved hitherto, we may expect that, for the ſame reaſons, (be they what they will) it ſhall continue to do ſo; and that the next, will likewiſe be ſtill more and more improving: and by the ſame Rule, perhaps each Part and Member of it, in its reſpective Order, and Proportion; every diſtinct *Claſs*, as it riſes above others, through all that *Scale* of Beings which exiſt together, may preſerve the ſame Uniformity in point of *Succeſſion* too; may follow upon each other, in no leſs regular Progreſs, in a growing Happineſs, through all Eternity; and thus the whole Creation be every way for ever beautifying in its Maker's Eye, and drawing nearer to him by Degrees of Reſemblance; as is ſuggeſted by an elegant Writer.* To theſe Deductions of Reaſon, Re-

* *Spectator*, N° 111.

velation

velation adds new Light, and Confirmation; (as it is in like manner itſelf illuſtrated, and eſtabliſh'd by them) it carries on, and compleats theſe Notices of Natural Religion, and improves the Proſpect, by expreſs Declarations of the unlimited Goodneſs of our Creator, towards *all* his Works; by giving *us* in particular, a poſitive Aſſurance, that we ſhall be exactly diſpoſed of in another State, according to our reſpective Deſerts, and Qualifications: fixing and aſcertaining our Hopes of arriving at thoſe bleſſed *Manſions*, where we ſhall find room for the free exerciſe, and full enjoyment, of each good Moral Habit, and intellectual Accompliſhment: furniſhing ample Motives for our Perſeverance in this Courſe, and guarding againſt every Deviation from it; eſpecially againſt that very dangerous Attendant on the nobleſt Diſpoſitions, Pride, and Self-ſufficiency: keeping us in a ſtrict Dependence on that God who is to be both our Guide thither, and our great Reward there; in whoſe Hands we always are, and ought to wiſh ourſelves; and to whoſe Bounty alone we owe, and ſhould be always very ſenſible that we do owe, *every good and every perfect Gift.* *

* *James* 1. 17.

Laſtly,

Laſtly, the more we trace the Ways of Providence in the *Moral* World, as alſo the Manner of conducting every *Diſpenſation* of Revealed Religion; (and we have had much better Means of tracing each of them) we ſee more of the Deſigns, and Purpoſes of each, than thoſe before us could; and from the Manner in which this Proſpect has already open'd, have Ground to think it will ſtill more and more enlarge; and though yet far from being able to comprehend the whole Scheme, (which is not to be wonder'd at in Beings which ſo lately ſprung from *Nothing*) yet we do comprehend enough already, to convince us, that there is a wiſe and good one, laid from the Beginning, and executed in a regular Gradation; and from thence alſo can infer, that it will ſtill be farther anſwering its ſeveral Ends, and ſtill appearing more to do ſo: that the *Manner* how this is to receive its Completion will unfold itſelf, as we proceed in the Study of it; adding our own Obſervations to thoſe of Times paſt, and *comparing Spiritual things with Spiritual*; as we do thoſe of the Natural World with one another; whereby we have diſcover'd ſeveral of its general Laws, unknown to former Ages, and probably by them judg'd undiſcoverable; and from ſome others, juſt beginning to diſcover

diſcover themſelves, find more room daily to believe, the Caſe will be the ſame with thoſe who ſhall come after us.

And thus it may be made appear, that the Means of Knowledge *natural*, *moral*, and *revealed*, have been imparted in a much more ample Manner than ever to *us*, *on whom the Ends of the World are come*. Why a more proper Application of them does not follow; why a proportional Improvement of theſe ſame Advantages is not at all times made; as this ſeems not to have a neceſſary Connection with the former, it muſt be accounted for on other Principles.[a] Whether by all theſe Means the World

[a] The ſame grand Principle of *Human Liberty*, which renders it morally impoſſible for any thing relating to the Minds or Circumſtances of Mankind, to remain long in a State of perfect Uniformity, as obſerv'd above [Part 1. p. 19. Note d.] may go a good way towards accounting for that partial and unequal manner of implanting, propagating and preſerving any religious Notices among Mankind, from the Beginning of the World to this Day; as well as for their various Degrees of either improving under or neglecting and abuſing theſe, together with all the other Gifts of Providence, and thereby making way for farther Diſpenſations in ſucceeding Ages, ſuitable thereto: And tho' I am ſenſible that what has been advanc'd with regard to the *Suitableneſs* of every Diſpenſation to the Exigences of the World, and ſo as to effect a *gradual Improvement*, in the moſt general Senſe, may ſeem at firſt ſight to require a great many Qualifications, from the long

might, and ought to have more true *Religion*,

long Reign of Idolatry before, and during the *Jewiſh* Eſtabliſhment, and from the like lamentable State of *Paganiſm* ſtill, together with that of *Popery* and *Mohammediſm*, under the Goſpel: yet even granting this in its full Force, allowing both for every general *Corruption* of Religion thro' moſt of the Climes and Ages of the World, and the particular Degeneracy thereof in ſeveral Parts and Periods of the ſame:—yet if we judge of its State, [as we uſe to form a Standard for Human Nature] not from the very worſt and moſt brutal parts thereof, or from Places where it lies under the moſt unnatural Reſtraints; but rather from the beſt point of Light, in which it may be placed among the wiſer and more ſober part of its Profeſſors in each Sect; and meaſure its proficiency in ſome of thoſe Nations where common Senſe has had room to exert itſelf, and common Honeſty and Ingenuity been ſuffer'd to mix with it in any Degree:— where the free Uſe of the Underſtanding has been once admitted in religious Matters:— [and where this is not the caſe with any people, Religion is quite out of the queſtion, being no more concern'd in their Affairs than as mere Matter of Form, or ſome political Machine]— If we take ſuch a View of Religion, and put the beſt Senſe on each point which it ſeems capable of, and which the ableſt of its Advocates admit or have advanc'd in its Defence — [without which we are only going to delude ourſelves]— If we allow their due Weight to thoſe different Gloſſes, put upon ſome of its oddeſt Points of Doctrine and Diſcipline, its ſeemingly unaccountable Rites and Ceremonies; — and to the ſeveral ſpecious Motives for either tolerating or eſtabliſhing ſuch among a People ſtupid enough to approve them, and ſcarce capable of reliſhing ought better: If we make our Enquiry into the State and Progreſs of Religion thro' the

World

and ſound *Morals*, now than formerly, will

World in this fair and free Manner, and take care to ſet out low enough at firſt, much lower I conceive than has been commonly imagin'd, [I mean not ſo much in reſpect of the Divine Revelations themſelves, as Mens Capacity of reaſoning upon them, and their Diſpoſition to apply them] if we reflect on the ſame ſlow gradual Increaſe of Corruptions in this and every other point, and their as ſlow and gradual Remedy: — if we conſider the many difficulties that attend the raiſing and keeping up a tolerable Spirit of Liberty and Ingenuity in any People for any time: — the many dangerous Abuſes to which Liberty itſelf lies conſtantly expoſed: — the difficulty of preſerving proper Care and Induſtry, — a right Senſe of and Attention to their Intereſts, — a Purity of Morals and Integrity of Heart; — or of reſtoring theſe in any Country where they have begun to decline; — if we reflect upon the World's continual proneneſs and propenſity to a decline in theſe reſpects, — together with the Cauſes of all this; — we ſhall not, I believe, be much ſurprized at the ſame happening in Religion; or imagine its Courſe to be either unconformable to or altogether unconnected with that of all *common Things* about us. Again, as its evident Connection with ſome of the things above mention'd muſt oblige us to allow of frequent Lets, and long Retrogradations in the Courſe of religious Knowledge, in moſt parts of the World, ſo the Relation which it bears, and the Advantage it receives from others, may perhaps authoriſe us to ſuppoſe that this Courſe, like to that of theirs, will notwithſtanding ſuch ſtill be in the main, and at the long run appear to have been, really *progreſſive*. Thus from the very Nature and Importance of the foremention'd Benefits it ſeems, that when theſe once get footing any where, they will gain ground and propagate themſelves

ſcarcely admit a Doubt: but whether it actu-

to other places, and draw along with them every thing of Conſequence that has a near relation to them; and when Religious Knowledge ſtands in this relation, as it does often unavoidably, it muſt even in the common courſe of things [contrary to the Nature of mere Ignorance, or Matters of empty Speculation and idle Curioſity] it will ſupport and ſpread its main and moſt important Branches, [ſuch as the Supremacy and Superintendence of ſome one God, and a State of final Retribution, &c. which have been, and are every where preſerv'd among the Heathen. See Part 1. p. 42. and *Grot.* de V. R. C. lib. 4. c. 12.] and thereby both promote and be itſelf promoted by the general Advances of the World, and *ſynchronize* with moſt of its more valuable Improvements. That this muſt be the Caſe in ſome degree, we ſeem to have ſufficient grounds for proving *à priori:* and from a true State of the *Fact*, with all its Circumſtances, 'tis probable, that this would not appear, even now, to be ſo very repugnant to it on the whole. However, that ſome time or other poſſibly we may diſcover things to ſtand thus, or at leaſt have room to ſuppoſe that they appear ſo in the Eye of the great Governour of the Univerſe, *who ſeeth not* in this reſpect *as Man ſeeth.* 'Tis plain, *all* Times and Places are not equally adapted to the Introduction of Diſcoveries either in common Science or Religion: and it ſeems no leſs clear from what we now know of the whole *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation and the frequent Revelations that accompanied it; [which were at firſt all put under a *carnal* Cover, in order to engage the warmeſt of their Affections, and induce them to take that care, which otherwiſe they would not have taken in the keeping of them; (See *Lowth*'s Directions, p. 161, &c.] and afterwards theſe were unfolded by degrees, and illuſtrated as the Day-Star began to ariſe in their Hearts;

and

ally has or not, becomes a very different En-

and from what has been obſerv'd of the Age wherein *Chriſtianity* itſelf was publiſhed, [Conſiderations, p. 172—6. 178—9. 200.] that Men have not been *always capable of receiving all the Light* [Dr. *Winder*, V. 2. p. 336.] from each religious Inſtitution, which it was fitted ever to convey, juſt *at the Time when it was firſt introduced into the World.* It may perhaps be deem'd ſufficient if they, to whom any ſuch was given, were ſo far qualified to *hear and profit by it*, [Conſiderations, p. 199.] as to receive ſomewhat of it themſelves, and hand it down to others in *a competent Degree of Purity*, and give it ſuch a ſure *Foundation* in the World as may ſupport it till all Circumſtances ſhall concur which muſt contribute to its *Fulneſs*, and carry it on to *a State of Maturity*. Many of theſe Circumſtances ſeem for ſome time to have been concurring in ſome parts of the World, and therefore may be look'd on as ſo many natural Means cooperating to produce this Effect there, in the general Theory of Religion; allowing for the Variations iſſuing from that Principle of Freedom abovemention'd. And if we view the preſent Growth of Science in theſe parts of the World which we are beſt acquainted with, and the eſtabliſhed Methods of preſerving and perpetuating it; remembering the Connection each of theſe has with the reſt, and with any religious Enquiries, as well as others to which they may be apply'd; to which *Application* likewiſe we ſeem to be now no leſs diſpoſed: — conſidering this, I ſay, 'tis ſcarcely poſſible to think that ſuch Improvements ſhould either themſelves be ever wholly loſt among Mankind, or not become the Means of raiſing and refining others, and thereby of accelerating a certain *Progreſs*, and advancing it to greater Heights in that of *religious*, as well as every Branch of *common* Knowledge; at leaſt that *this* appears

quiry.[b] Though perhaps ſomething might be ſaid in favour of the preſent Times, in both reſpects.

Firſt, That we exceed the wiſeſt among ancient Heathens, who either practis'd, or at leaſt

to be on the recovering hand, (tho' under ſome degree of Struggle) and riſing higher and faſter by their Means, than it could ever be conceiv'd to riſe without them: which is, I humbly apprehend, as much as I am concern'd to maintain at preſent.

[b] 'It does appear to me very *probable*, to ſay the leaſt, 'that *Jews* and *Chriſtians*, notwithſtanding all their Vices 'and Corruptions, have, upon the whole, been always 'better than Heathens and Unbelievers. It ſeems to me 'alſo, that as the Knowledge of true, pure and perfect 'Religion is advanced and diffuſed more and more every 'day, ſo the Practiſe of it correſponds thereto: But then 'this, from the Nature of the Thing, is a Fact of a leſs 'obvious kind; however, if it be true, it will become 'manifeſt in due time. Let us ſuppoſe a perſon to maintain that Civil Government, the Arts of Life, Medicines, *&c.* have never been of uſe to Mankind, becauſe 'it does not appear from any certain Calculation, that 'the Sum total of Health and Happineſs is greater among 'the polite Nations, than among the barbarous ones. 'Would it not be thought a ſufficient Anſwer to this, 'to appeal to the obvious good Effects of theſe Things 'in innumerable Inſtances, without entering into a Calculation impoſſible to be made? However, it does here 'alſo appear, that, as far as we are able to judge, civilized Countries are, upon the whole, in a more happy 'State, than barbarous ones, in all theſe reſpects.' *Hartley*'s Obſervations on Man, *&c.* V. 2. p. 176.

per-

permitted, and connived at the Worſhip of monſtrous Deities, and moſt unnatural Rites, is readily allow'd; and with reaſon attributed to the Superiority of the *Chriſtian* Diſpenſation; in compariſon with which, former Ages are juſtly term'd *Days of Darkneſs*; and that we of the Reformation, as much excell the dark Times of *Monkery*, in rational true Piety, might perhaps be as eaſily granted; and with equal Juſtice aſcribed to the ſuperior Knowledge that we have of our own Diſpenſation. We have indeed leſs Shew and Ceremony, now than ever; leſs of the *Form of Godlineſs* in general; but 'tis hoped, not leſs of the real Power. Unprofitable Auſterities are rather chang'd for that more *reaſonable Service*, and Devotion, which renders the Deity amiable, and the Imitation of him uſeful to Mankind; which makes each Worſhipper more happy in himſelf, and helpful to his Fellow-Creatures. There ſeems to be much leſs of *Superſtition*, and Reliance on ſuch Things as can at beſt be but *Means* to Religion, and often hardly that; nay rather tend to take Men off the proper Principle, and ſubſtitute another very different in its room; teaching them to *compound* for real Goodneſs, the Subſtance of all true Religion, by that which has not ſo much as even its Shadow;

and leading them to contend about that, with ſuch a Temper, as could not poſſibly be exercis'd, or entertain'd, in any Thing that bore a near relation to the other. It ſeems, I ſay, as if there were leſs of all this; and that there would be leſs yet, would all thoſe who perceive its Remains, unite in Oppoſition to it, with that Zeal and Soberneſs, which true Religion only can inſpire.

As to that Spirit of *Infidelity*, which ſo remarkably prevails at preſent, they who are confident that they underſtand Religion thoroughly, and profeſs it in its utmoſt Purity, muſt condemn this Humour of examining all Parts of it, as abſolutely bad, and of pernicious Conſequence: they who are not ſo ſanguine, will conclude that there are very good Ends to be ſerv'd by it; whatever be the Fate, or the Intent, of ſuch (and ſuch it muſt be own'd there are) as moſt injuriouſly oppoſe Religion: Theſe believe that there is the ſame Neceſſity for ſuffering this *Heretical Turn* in general, as for any particular *Hereſies*; and that thereby already Truths of great Importance are made manifeſt. They ſee and lament the Conſequences of long neglecting to review Eſtabliſhments; and ſuffering the public Wiſdom of paſt Ages to ſerve here, and here only, for all following ones.

ones [a]. They think there has been ſo much *Wood*, *Hay*, *Stubble* built on the Foundation, as muſt take a conſiderable Time to be removed; eſpecially when they ſee ſome got no farther yet, than to doubt whether there be occaſion to have any thing at all removed; or even to deny that there is reaſon, either for

[a] 'But there are few Chriſtian Princes who lay this to 'heart, and Divines have quite other things in their 'thoughts: their great Buſineſs is to maintain what 'is eſtabliſh'd, and to diſpute with thoſe who find fault 'with it. On the other hand, Knowledge or Reſolution 'is wanting; and there is not enough of Honeſty or 'Greatneſs of Soul to confeſs the Truth. Few Writers 'have the courage to ſpeak ſo impartially as the famous 'Author of the Hiſtory of the Reformation in *England* 'has done, in the Preface to his ſecond Volume. It is 'thought by many Perſons that all would be ruin'd if 'the leaſt Alteration was made. Some of theſe Defects— 'are now become inviolable Cuſtoms and Laws. Every 'body fancies true and pure *Chriſtianity* to be that which 'obtains in his Country, or in the Society he lives in; 'and it is not ſo much as put to the Queſtion, whether or 'not ſome things ſhould be altered. As long as *Chriſtians* 'are poſſeſſed with theſe Prejudices, we muſt not expect 'to ſee Chriſtianity reſtored to an entire Purity.' *Cauſes of the preſent Corruption of Chriſtians*, *Part* 2. pag. 271. How applicable theſe Reflections are to the preſent Age, may perhaps be determin'd by the Reception which a well meant Propoſal for ſome farther Reformation ſhall meet with. See *Free and candid Diſquiſitions*, printed for *A. Millar*.

attempting, or ſo much as wiſhing, farther Reformation. They obſerve Light, and Liberty at the ſame time advancing with an equal pace, and affording their mutual Help; as they do generally *, to ſeparate theſe, from the *Gold*, *Silver*, *Precious Stones*; many having taken the *Fan* in hand, and reſolv'd thoroughly to purge the Floor; though ſome be apt to throw away part of the good Seed, together with the *Chaff*; which alſo generally has been the caſe, and is a very natural one.

Secondly, As to the preſent *Morals*, it may perhaps be a Queſtion whether they grow worſe upon the whole, when it is conſider'd, that the leſs Vices, as well as Uneaſineſſes, of paſt Times are ſoon forgot; and the moſt flagrant, notorious ones only appear upon Record: — that we are apt to judge thoſe Evils greateſt, which we feel ourſelves, and that Good leaſt, which ſeems to rival and eclipſe our own, and raiſes Envy in the room of Admiration; — and that hence, one of them is often aggravated, the other extenuated moſt unduly [a]. On

* It would be unpardonable to neglect referring the Reader for a Demonſtration of this to Dr. *Winder*'s Deſcription of the Benefits of *Liberty* civil and religious. Hiſt. of Knowl. V. 2. c. 21. S. 3.

[a] See Bp. *Fleetwood*'s firſt Charge, p. 6, *&c.* and *Ibbot*'s Serm. on *Eccl.* 7. 10. with *Brown*'s Cauſes of Common Errors, B. 1. c. 6, *&c.*

which

which account, Vices may not probably be greater now in general, but we more immediately concern'd with them, and ſuffering under them; eſpecially the reigning ones, (of which there always have been ſome *) as thoſe of Faction and Corruption, Luxury, and Lewdneſs ſeem to be at preſent; and great ones indeed they are, eſpecially in our own Country; which yet perhaps are not worſe than the reigning ones of former Times: and 'tis to be remember'd, that they come attended with the foremention'd Advantages of Light and Liberty, in ſuch a degree, as we can never be too thankful for; and which we hope will ſpeedily correct them; the one enabling Men ſoon to ſee their evil conſequences, the other allowing them full ſcope to cenſure, and expoſe them; and through both theſe, it may be that each other Vice becomes more open, and apparent now, rather than of ſuperior ſize, and ſtrength. So that concerning the preſent Times, we have ſome room to think that they

* 'There is a certain Liſt of Vices committed in all 'Ages, and declaimed againſt by all Authors, which will 'laſt as long as Human Nature; or digeſted into com-'mon places may ſerve for any Theme, and never be out 'of date until Dooms-day.' *Brown*'s Vulgar Errors, p. 22.

are

are not abſolutely worſe than all before them, as to *Morals* [b]. Perhaps I may be allow'd to advance a ſtep farther, and ſuppoſe them better in ſome reſpects; that we have certain Virtues now in greater Perfection, particularly more of true *Charity*, or *Univerſal Benevolence*, than ever ſince the time of primitive *Chriſtianity* [c]. —

[b] I believe it would be hard to produce modern inſtances of Cruelty and Barbarity in any civilized State, whether in War or Peace, equal to ſuch as were decreed publickly, and executed without the leaſt ſeeming remorſe, by the politeſt People of Antiquity: Witneſs their frequent refuſing Quarter, their Triumphs, torturing of Slaves; their Proſcriptions, Poiſonings, expoſing Children, Rapes, *&c.* which need no aggravation. There is even at this day a ſort of Decency in all our public Councils and Deliberations: and I believe the boldeſt of our Demagogues would hardly undertake, in a popular Aſſembly, to propoſe any thing parallel to the Rape of the *Sabines*, the moſt unjuſt uſage of *L. T. Collatinus*, or the ungrateful treatment of *Camillus*; which, as a learned Father obſerves, were pieces of Iniquity agreed to by the public Body of the *Romans*. Inſtances of the ſame kind with the two laſt every one knows occur frequently among the *Greeks*, as well as *Romans*, in the politeſt Ages of their Government. See Sir *T. P. Blount* Eſſ. p. 145.

[c] I may add, that there ſeems to be a more perfect reſignation to the Will of God, and acquieſcence in his Providence, among all Ranks of Men; a greater Firmneſs in enduring Pain; more Chearfulneſs and Courage in ſubmitting to Death, among the generality, even of loweſt Education: in ſhort, that Mankind may be ſaid to grow more ſpiritual and *intellectual*, in theſe and many other reſpects,

But if this be deem'd a miſtake, and too partial fondneſs for the preſent Times, I truſt it will be alſo judg'd a pardonable one, amid ſo much moſt evident Partiality againſt them; eſpecially as it is on the charitable ſide; and tends to make them really better than they would be, did worſe opinions of them univerſally prevail: which brings me, in the laſt place, to the *Conſequences* that attend the other way of thinking.

Theſe have been hinted at in the beginning of this Diſcourſe, and might be ſhewn more particularly to affect the Honour of God, our own Happineſs, and that of others; in as much as the foregoing ſuppoſition caſts a Cloud over all the Works of God, — confounds our No-

ſpects, than they have been in former Ages. 'I think it 'may be ſaid, in Honour of the preſent Age, that [with 'a few exceptions] Controverſy is carried on with more 'Decency and good Manners than in any former Period 'of time that can be named; which, together with the '*Toleration* granted by Law, in this and other Proteſtant 'Countries, for all Perſons to worſhip God in their own 'way; and that *Chriſtian* Charity and Moderation, which 'is generally ſhewn towards thoſe that differ from us, 'ſeems already to be attended with good Effect. — The 'ſetting up ſo many *Charity-Schools* as have of late years 'been erected in theſe Kingdoms, — the forming of *Re-'ligious Societies*, and other good means, have greatly con-'tributed to the promoting the Knowledge and Practiſe 'of Virtue and Religion among us.' *Worthington*'s Eſſay, p. 157, 158.

tions

tions of his Wiſdom, Power and Goodneſs;—raiſes Diſtruſt, if not Diſbelief of all his Perfections, and thereby deadens our Devotion toward him;—damps and diſcourages all Study; and deſtroys the pleaſure that would ariſe from a Survey of both the *Natural*, and *Moral* World, and from Reflections on the Station we hold in them;—renders us far leſs ſenſible of the Happineſs within our power, and by conſequence makes us receive leſs from them;—not only hinders Men from growing better, but actually makes them worſe; and ſuffers the World daily to decline, through a perſwaſion that it is deſign'd to do ſo; it having been obſerv'd, that thoſe Writings which *villanize* Mankind, have a pernicious tendency towards propagating, and protecting Villany, and help moſt of all to teach and encourage it[d]; in the

[d] In proof of the foregoing Obſervation, not to mention here ſuch foreign Authors as *Eſprit*, *Rochefoucauld*, and *Bayle*, who have taken a deal of perverſe pains to eradicate all ſeeds of Humanity out of the Human Breaſt;—ſufficient evidence may be had from a famous writer of our own, the Author of the *Fable of the Bees*, who by a ſhew of ſuperior penetration into the low Motives and ignoble Paſſions which are too apt to ſway People;—by pointing at the means whereby a politician may ſometimes *avail* himſelf of theſe, as well as ſerve ſome preſent Intereſt of the Public in indulging them;—by a droll way of deſcribing things, and a due mixture of ſome very ill-natured Truths,

ſame manner as thoſe which perpetually dwell on the dark ſide of things, and difficulties that

Truths, that looks like more than ordinary ſagacity and a ſhrewd knowledge of the world, and ſerves to gratify a man's own Vanity, or Spleen, while it appears to be expoſing that of others; — in fine, by dwelling altogether on the Foibles and the Follies of the worſt and weakeſt of mankind, — has drawn ſuch an horrid and at the ſame time humourous Picture of the Species, as has at once diverted, and debauch'd the Principles of more perſons of the beſt underſtandings amongſt us than perhaps any other writer of late years.

And tho' we allow the Obſervation of an abler Author of the ſame ſtamp, *viz.* that *Principles* have ſeldom ſuch an immediate influence on Men's behaviour, or their tempers, as a predominant *Paſſion*, or a ſettled *Habit*; yet we may inſiſt upon it, that the former of theſe, when perverted, help very much to ſtrengthen and encourage any kind of irregularity in the latter; at leaſt they are exceedingly apt to diſcourage and debilitate any attempt to ſubdue an exorbitant Paſſion, or inveterate Habit: they deſtroy all vigorous Endeavours toward eſtabliſhing right methods of ſelf-government; they indiſpoſe us for attending to that moral Diſcipline which is ſo neceſſary to conduct ourſelves with innocence and uſefulneſs thro' Life, and yet ſo difficult when oppoſed to the ſtream of evil Cuſtom, or the tide of vicious Inclination. Such Principles eſpecially as are advanc'd in the fore-mention'd Book, inſtead of exciting us to love, partake of and ſtrive to promote the Happineſs of our Fellow-Creatures, and to delight in paying a grateful Homage to our common Parent, muſt rather bring us to a fix'd contempt and hatred of the generality of theſe; give us unworthy narrow notions of the Creator and Governour of this World, and cut off the

leaſt

attend our ſearch after the ways of God, ſerve only to darken the view ſtill more, and multi-

leaſt proſpect of enlarging or improving them in any other. They muſt cauſe a Decay of public Spirit, and a want of public Faith, a decline and gradual Diſſolution of private Honour, Truth, and common Honeſty: the very leaſt that can be expected from them is an indolent unſatisfying ſtate of mind within one's ſelf, and an averſion towards any pains or trouble in the gratifying, ſerving or ſupporting others. And tho' ſuch a deep diſcovery of the Springs of Action may ſeem beſt to ſhew us how men are moſt eaſily led, yet were it all true, it wou'd ſhew at the ſame time that ſuch Creatures are not worth the leading; ſince it palls all the pleaſure of converſing with them, ſtrikes at the very root of univerſal Benevolence which alone can ſupply that pleaſure; blaſts every publickly ſocial diſpoſition, and all the *Charities* of private Life: in ſhort, deſtroys all that is great and good, or amiable in them, or which can make any ſuperior Station eligible amongſt them.

But farther, if there be a real Syſtem of things preeſtabliſh'd upon different Principles, — then muſt ſuch Schemes of Government prove full as uſeleſs, as uncomfortable, being wholly founded on a falſe bottom, and at every turn oppoſing what they never can overthrow; ſince he who framed this Syſtem will aſſuredly take care to ſupport it in his own way, whether we will or no: and if the original Plan on which it was form'd, and the Laws calculated to direct it, be thought of themſelves inſufficient to that end, there is ſtill ground [from Nature and Reaſon, ſetting aſide poſitive Declarations] to believe that he would rather interpoſe ſometimes to ſecure the eſtabliſhment thereof, than ſuffer it to be quite ruin'd and revers'd. The Governour of which Syſtem therefore ought

to

ply theſe very Difficulties. How much better both the End and the Effect of thoſe, which

to be attended to as ſuch in all good Policy; and our political Syſtem framed in ſome kind of conformity to that great Model; by a careful contemplation of the chief End and prepollent Quality in each part of his Works; by a ſtudious Survey of all the Dignity and Harmony and Happineſs conſpicuous in the general Conduct of them. But in ſuch Schemes as we are now examining the ſupreme Governour of the World is either quite omitted, or introduced in ſo degrading a manner, as makes him ev'n dependent on, and obliged to an evil Principle for moſt part of the Beauty and chief Benefit of his Work: it gives ſo baſe an Idea both of this Syſtem and its Author, as muſt ſhock any one who is willing to entertain the leaſt degree of Reverence or Regard for either; or has any juſt Concern even for himſelf, as being unavoidably link'd in ſo near a Relation to, and cloſe Connection with theſe, from whence he is like to receive ſo little either of true Honour or Advantage.

How much more beautiful and juſt a Theory might with leſs Labour be erected on ſound Morals, and a Senſe of Religion? which would make all true, rational Pleaſure coincide, and render the preſent State of things not only uniform and abſolutely deſireable in itſelf, but alſo the direct Road, the natural Paſſport to a better: which, beſide a deal of pure good in poſſeſſion, muſt fill and extend the Soul with everlaſting hope of infinitely greater. Where every Virtue would in every one eſſentially promote and perfect thoſe of others, and each with infinite Conſiſtency conſpire to exert the natural Effects of all in univerſal Happineſs; without that motley mixture of the contrary Qualities, which can at beſt but indirectly and accidentally, and by their being extraneouſly over-ruled,

pro-

place Human Nature in its faireſt Light, and repreſent the *lovely Form* as worthy of its Au-

produce any ſhare thereof. For after all, when once we come to underſtand ourſelves, we ſhall find that Vice in general does in its own Nature, and in every Degree of it, tend to produce Miſery, or prevent Happineſs, either mediately or immediately in every Syſtem [from whence indeed it has its Name, and on account of which only it has ever been prohibited by Divine and human Laws], tho' this its tendency may probably be over-ruled in many particular Caſes, or it may be ſuſpended or ſuperſeded by the Introduction of oppoſite Qualities, which, thro' the unavoidable Imperfection of Language, are often miſtaken for it; or it may be in ſuch a manner really blended and confounded with theſe, as to be hardly diſtinguiſhable from them; or in ſuch a degree counterpois'd and ballanc'd by ſome jarring Principles, or inconſiſtent Species of its own, that its Effects are not ſo plain and obvious; eſpecially in large Societies and complex Bodies, where more than ordinary Skill is requiſite to compute the Conſequences of each particular Act or Habit, and aſſign each Influence to its proper Cauſe. But this grows more apparent in ſmall Families and private Conſtitutions, where *Vice* of every ſort and ſize is ſeen to create proportionable Corruption and Diſorder in the Body politic, as ſurely as *Venom*, or a Poiſon properly ſo call'd, does in the natural one: tho' in ſome critical Circumſtances ſuch a violent Struggle and Convulſion may be rais'd thereby in both of them, as may occaſion very extraordinary Effects; and two bad Qualities in conteſt with each other, inſtead of ruining, may poſſibly relieve an oppreſs'd Conſtitution, as ſometimes even *bina Venena juvant*. Yet ſtill, notwithſtanding ſome ſuch very unuſual Phœnomena, the diſtinct Properties and regular Production of natural Bodies, as well as thoſe of moral

thor; as well as of thoſe that diſplay the Beauty, and Beneficence of the Divine Oeconomy;

moral Qualities, are both of them fix'd, and fairly diſcoverable in the main; we are tolerably well appriſed what naturally conduces to the preſervation and proſperity of each; and on the whole may reſt well ſatisfied, that if the latter were compoſed of ſuch a Number of rank heterogeneous Principles as this ſame Author is inclined to ſuppoſe, they would not long ſubſiſt as we now find them; nor could the World poſſibly go on ſo well as it has done and does. So far is that Poſition therefore from being juſt, which this ſame Author has put into the very Title of his Book, *viz.* that *Vice*, properly ſo call'd, whether private or public, is a real *Benefit*, that the reverſe is ſtrictly true in general; which might be proved as clearly by an induction of particulars as Sir *W. Temple* has made out the thing in one ſtrong Caſe, which was unhappily this Author's leading Inſtance, *viz.* that of *Luxury*, or Exceſs, being of Advantage to a beneficial *Trade*. See *Temple*'s Obſervations on the *Netherlands*, p. 66. Fol. But granting all the Facts to be juſt as this Author ſtates them; were the Bulk of Mankind altogether as vile and vicious as he repreſents them, yet would it be of no real Service to lay open ſuch a Sink of Pollution, and thereby only ſpread the Infection farther ſtill and faſter; it cannot be of ſo much uſe to exhibit Men entirely *as they are*, even in their very worſt Light; as it muſt be to place them where they oft really have been, and where they always might and ought to be. Nor can ſuch Views of the World prove any Entertainment to one that is either deſirous of concurring in any thing for the Improvement of it, or of contributing at all to the Eaſe and Agreeableneſs of his own Situation in it.—But I propoſed to make only ſome general Obſervations on the Genius and main Drift of this celebrated Book, as

and produce an Aſſurance of that paternal Care, and Conduct of us here, which brings the trueſt Enjoyment, and moſt grateful Acknowledge-

a Specimen of ſuch ſort of Writings; the Particulars of it having been ſufficiently confuted long ago. I ſhall conclude with obſerving, that the celebrated Author of the *Characteriſticks* and this Writer, who ſo conſtantly oppoſes him, are evidently in two Extremes, the firſt contending for a Benevolence quite pure in kind, and perfectly diſintereſted, and without any other End than its own Exerciſe; which is neither reconcileable to Fact, nor to the Frame of ſuch Beings as we are at preſent: the latter centering all in *Self*, and conſtituting its chief Good in ſome of the very loweſt Gratifications: which is alike groundleſs, but attended with worſe Conſequences. Between theſe there is manifeſtly a middle way, whereby the *moral Senſe* and that of *Honour*, &c. may be form'd by way of *Habit*, really diſtinct from, and ſtriking previouſly to any private Views, and generally with greater Force too than cou'd be produced by the moſt vigorous and intenſe Reflection (which is ever of great uſe and often neceſſary in Matters of the laſt Importance); yet this may be ſo far qualify'd by a Mixture of the other Paſſions, and ſo well directed to the beſt and nobleſt Ends by Reaſon, as to keep clear of all the Abſurdities of the former Syſtem, which runs ſo naturally into rank *Enthuſiaſm*; and likewiſe to avoid the ill Conſequences that attend the latter, which is ſo apt to ſink us into the very Dregs of Vice and *Villany*. This has been juſt propoſed above [Part 1. Not. b. p. 12, *&c.*] and I find no ſufficient ground to doubt of its being in itſelf the moſt conformable to the true Nature of Mankind in general, and beſt adapted to promote the higheſt Degree of Happineſs in ſocial Life.

ment

ment of preſent Benefits; and likewiſe begets a joyful Hope, and Expectation of more ſubſtantial ones hereafter!

The *Conſequences* of the foregoing Doctrine might be urg'd farther, in regard both to the *Atheiſt* and *Deiſt*; to convince the one, that all things have not gone at random, but that there are plain tokens of a Plan, and Government; and from what has already paſt, reaſon to think that more of it will ever appear, and in a ſtill more perfect manner: to ſhew the other, that as the ſeveral Diſpenſations of, what we call Revealed Religion, have hitherto been in the main conformable to thoſe of Providence, in both the natural and moral World, this poſſibly may come from the ſame Author; and receive yet farther increaſe, which theſe alſo do, as they are daily better underſtood.

But if this be not the Caſe in any Degree here, we ſeem to have nothing left whereon to ground an *Analogical* Argument (which yet is our beſt, if not our only natural Argument) for an Hereafter; no viſible Footſteps of Wiſdom and Goodneſs, to conduct us in our Search after a Firſt Cauſe; no ſettled Foundation for our Hopes of Futurity, the Baſis of all Natural Religion: All is Chaos, and Confuſion thus far, and therefore may be ſo, for ought we

know, eternally; either without any good, conſiſtent Scheme at all, or that, as ſoon as fix'd, unfix'd again, and diſappointed:—— in ſhort, the Divine Government, if there be one, muſt on this Scheme be inferior to moſt Human Adminiſtrations.

Thus then we ſee how neceſſary it is to form right Notions of the paſt State of the World, eſpecially in regard to that important Point, *Religion*, in order to judge how it will be for the future; and in what manner we are to conduct ourſelves. If it has hitherto been really progreſſive, we find good Reaſon to expect the ſame ſtill farther. We have ſtrong Motives to go into this Scheme ourſelves; and clear Directions how to proceed in it. Inſtead of looking back and labouring to confine it to the Model of paſt Times, we learn rather with the great *Apoſtle*, to *forget thoſe Things which are behind, reaching forward unto thoſe Things that are before, and preſſing toward the Mark.** And, to uſe the ſame *Apoſtle*'s Advice, *Let us therefore as many as deſire to be perfect, be thus minded.* As we have the beſt Means of effecting this within our Power; as we live under the mildeſt, moſt indulgent of all Governments, and enjoy the Bleſſing of *Liberty* in that Perfection,

* *Phil.* 3. 13, *&c.*

which

which has been unknown to former Ages; a Bleſſing [ſuffer me once more to remind us of it] which includes every thing valuable in Life, and above all things tends moſt to accelerate the Progreſs abovementioned: Let us, inſtead of making it either a Covering for *Sedition* † againſt ſuch a Government, or a Cauſe of gratifying our *Maliciouſneſs* againſt each other, be diligent in uſing it to the good Purpoſes for which it is ſo liberally indulg'd us; and render ours as much ſuperior to thoſe Nations that are deprived of it, as moſt other Countries are obſerved to have been, in like Circumſtances.

Let us concur with this auſpicious Courſe of Providence, and each contribute our endeavours towards carrying on this Progreſs, by every ſerious, fair and free Enquiry: *free*, not only from all outward Violence and Clamour; but alſo from (what our moſt holy Religion with the greateſt Reaſon equally condemns, as being the Root from whence theſe ſpring) all inward Bitterneſs, Wrath, Hatred *: learning to bear with one another's Miſtakes, in this,

† Vid. *Benſon* on 1 *Pet.* 2. 16.

* 'Young People ought to be taught, that there is no 'Hereſy ſo *bad*, nor ſo *contrary* to the Spirit of *Chriſtia-* 'nity, as to believe it to be proper or lawful to *hate* or 'perſecute a Fellow Creature and a Brother, for an *Opi-* 'nion, which he declares in the Simplicity and Sincerity

as well as other Matters; nay rather the more here, ſince theſe are of the higheſt Conſequence, and this the only proper Method to remove them: thus labouring, as well to reform the Errors of our Brethren in Love, as to promote and confirm their Knowledge of the Truth; *not for that* in either Caſe *we have Dominion over their Faith, but as being Helpers of their Joy.* † And thus ſhall Religion be at length ſuffer'd to partake the benefit of thoſe *Improvements*, which everything beſide enjoys. I deſire it may be obſerved here once for all, that when I mention *Improvements* in Religion, I don't by any Means intend a Diſcovery of new Points, or improving upon the original Revelation itſelf, ‡ in any thing eſſential to the general Doctrine of Salvation: but only a more perfect Comprehenſion of what was formerly deliver'd; a View of the Extent and Excellence of this great Myſtery conceal'd from former Ages; and which, though given almoſt all at once, yet was receiv'd perhaps but partially, at leaſt by the Bulk of Mankind, as was obſerv'd above †;

' of his Heart, he has impartially examin'd, and thinks ' he finds to be agreeable to the Senſe of Scripture. ' *Thoughts on Education* by the Author of *Britain's Remembrancer*, p. 28.

† 2 *Cor.* 1. 24.

‡ See Part. 2. p. 170, 171. † Ibid. 167.

and

and ſoon adulterated to ſuch a Degree, as (I beg leave to repeat it) may take yet more Time to rectify; eſpecially when ſo much Rubbiſh has been ſince continually thrown upon the Scriptures, both by Tranſlators and Expoſitors, as, if we ſet aſide the Care of a particular Providence, (which has in this reſpect [ſo far I mean as relates to the Text] been very remarkable) might make us juſtly wonder they have not ſunk under it. This has, in theſe Parts of the World, been for ſome Time a Clearing off, by the Help of a more ſound Philoſophy; as well as by more ſober Rules of Criticiſm; a much more cloſe, conſiſtent Method of Interpretation; which muſt produce as great a Difference in them, as if they were quite different Books.[d] Though perhaps even here, it would not be a

[d] 'I cannot but hope that when it ſhall pleaſe God to 'ſtir up Perſons of a philoſophical Genius, well furniſh'd 'with critical Learning, and the Principles of true Phi-'loſophy, and ſhall give them a hearty Concern for the 'Advancement of his Truths; theſe Men, by exerciſing 'upon Theological Matters that Inquiſitiveneſs and Sa-'gacity that has made in our Age ſuch a happy Progreſs 'in philoſophical ones, will make Explications and Diſ-'coveries, that will juſtify more than I have ſaid in praiſe 'of the Study of our Religion, and the Divine Books that 'contain the Articles of it. For theſe want not Excel-'lence, but only ſkilful Unvailers.' *Boyle*'s Excell. of 'Theol. p. 47.

difficult Taſk, were it not too invidious, to ſuggeſt Means of yet farther Improvement. Perhaps we ought to attend ſtill more to the *Hebrew* Idiom, and obſerve the vaſt Diſparity between the Eaſtern way of ſpeaking, and our own; for want of which, 'tis to be fear'd, we oft retain the Words without the Senſe, nay with a very different one; and by adhering too much to the Letter, are apt to overſtrain moſt Things; and carry them both beyond common Reaſon, and the Nature of the Subject. Perhaps our very Reverence for theſe ſacred Writings miſapply'd, our too unguarded Zeal to do them Honour, and ſupport their Divine Authority, againſt that Church which ſubſtitutes another in its room, may have contributed to caſt a Cloud over the whole; which makes us as it were afraid to look into them, and examine them, with the ſame Freedom that we do, and find we muſt do, every other Book which we deſire to underſtand: — I mean the Notion of an *abſolute*, immediate *Inſpiration* of each part and period; even where the Writers themſelves, by the very manner of expreſſing themſelves, moſt effectually diſclaim it: [a] which beſide the bad Effects it may be ſuppoſed to have at preſent, when once it appears, (as ſoon perhaps it

[a] See Inſtances in *Whitby* on the *N. T.* Gen. Pref. p. 6.

Books,

may) to have no good Foundation in theſe holy Books,[aa] 'tis to be fear'd, it will produce a worſe, by tending to diſcredit that *partial* one, whether of *Guidance*, or *Suggeſtion*, which upon ſome occaſions they do claim; which is abſolutely requiſite to ſecure a due authority to them; and which, when prudently diſtinguiſh'd from the other, has, and we truſt ever will appear to have, ground ſufficient to ſupport itſelf.

[aa] As I would not give any unneceſſary Offence in ſuch a tender point as this, which moſt Writers are ſtill very unwilling to give up expreſsly, though they ſeem forc'd to treat it either in a confuſed, or a contradictory way; I ſhall beg leave to explain myſelf a little upon this Head.

The true Senſe then of the *Divine Authority* of the Books of the *O. T.* and which perhaps is enough to denominate them in general Θεοπνευστοι, ſeems to be this; that as in thoſe times God has all along, beſide the Inſpection of his general Providence, interfered upon particular Occaſions, by giving expreſs Commiſſions to ſome Perſons (thence call'd *Prophets*) to declare his Will in various manners, and degrees of evidence, [ſee *Smith.* Sel. Diſc. N. 6.] as beſt ſuited the Occaſion, Time and Nature of the Subject; and in all other caſes, left them and the reſt of the World, as to religious Matters, wholly to themſelves; in like manner he has interpoſed his more immediate Aſſiſtance, (and notify'd it to them, as they did to the World) in the *recording* of theſe Revelations, ſo far as that was neceſſary, amidſt the common (but from hence term'd *Sacred*) Hiſtory of thoſe times; and mix'd with various other Occurrences; in which the Hiſtorian's own natural Qualifications were ſufficient to enable him

to

To this high, I had almoſt ſaid, blind, reverence for the Words of Holy Scriptures, per-

to relate things with all the Accuracy they required; and where a ſupernatural interpoſition would have been unworthy of its Author: which mixture of Divine and Human, in the ſame Times, Things, Perſons and their Hiſtory, ſeems much more conformable to the other Works of God; and affords many Circumſtances, which, though ſome of them ſeem to come in by the bye, and are often contained in a mere parentheſis; yet more clearly evince, and will in all Ages more inconteſtably confirm, the Reality of a Divine Concurrence, and ſupport the genuineneſs of that relation which contains it, (by offering ſo many means to confute every pretended inſtance of it were it groundleſs;) than if ſuch Revelations had been all made and recorded at one time, by themſelves, and by men altogether over-ruled in the delivery of them. This likewiſe ſeems in a good meaſure to have been the caſe with the *N. T.* Writers, who notwithſtanding the things they were to deliver are moſtly of greater conſequence, and more cloſely united in point of Time, Place and other Circumſtances; notwithſtanding the extraordinary aſſiſtance of the *Spirit*, which was to abide with them, and lead them into all neceſſary Truth; and for the moſt part either the thing itſelf ſhews, or they give us ſufficient intimation, when they are obliged to have recourſe to that aſſiſtance; yet from the very form in which they uſually deliver them, it muſt appear, that this Influence is no leſs frequently ſuſpended in the delivery of theſe fundamental Truths: and beſide theſe, how oft do the ſame Perſons condeſcend to treat of other inferior, controverſial Matters; uſeful indeed, ſome to the then preſent, ſome to all future times; but ſurely of a very different nature from

the

haps I may be allow'd to add another, full as great, relating to the Senſe: not the true, real

the former, and in which that Influence and Aſſiſtance does not ſeem ſo requiſite! How juſtly do they place the Evidence of Facts, on their own Senſes only! declaring *what they have ſeen and heard*; which at all times may, and which alone can, be produced as proper Proof. In Reaſonings, how beautifully do they add their private Sentiments; and in affairs of ſmaller moment, even their Conjectures, to what they had received from the *Lord* himſelf! where Circumſtances ſhew us the expediency of ſuch Additions, and where Common Senſe was, and will be always, equally ſufficient to diſtinguiſh one from the other, as it is to interpret the whole Scriptures, (ſo far as they become neceſſary to be interpreted,) without any other more infallible Guide.—But Common Senſe is generally laid aſide in Subjects of this nature. Many good Men think they can never do too much to decry it, to ſet the Bible at variance with it, or carry the whole up beyond its reach; though by ſchemes merely of their own Invention, rather than forming any judgment from what they really find in that ſacred Book. Not content with a *Moral Evidence* of its *Truth*, which is clear, ſtrong, and every way ſufficient for the conviction of all fair Enquirers; [v. *Jaquelot* de la Verité, & de l'Inſpiration, *&c.* c. 6. p. 45.] they muſt needs introduce another, where there is no room for it; and inſiſt on ſuch *univerſal*, abſolute *Infallibility*, as never can be made out, to thoſe who are not already perſuaded of it; (and who can have no other Evidence for ſuch perſuaſion, than the ſame moral one, on which that *Truth* is grounded) and which is at laſt either uſeleſs, or inconſiſtent with thoſe natural Proofs, which conſtitute the Credibility of this and every other Hiſtory ſo circumſtanc'd. Is not a Moral Evidence enough

one; for which we cannot ſurely have too much concern; but one which ſometimes widely

enough to aſſure us of the Genuineneſs, and Incorruptneſs of theſe Writings? Why ſhould it not then, where it can take place, be ſufficient for the Authors themſelves to proceed on in writing; and equally aſcertain the Truth of what they have written? and why ſhould the generality of the *Compoſition* (were any great ſtreſs ever to be laid upon it) be deem'd altogether Divine; when the *Conveyance*, which ſo much affects that, is allow'd to be no more than Human? Moſt Perſons now begin to ſee that there is at leaſt ſome mixture of this latter in the *Language*, and I believe, upon due conſideration, it will appear that there is no greater Difficulty to admit it in the *Senſe*, on ſeveral Occaſions.

I am very ſenſible that what is here hinted, is too ſuperficial to give any tolerable ſatisfaction on ſo nice a point; nor have I any thoughts of going deeper into it; but can with great Truth aſſure the Reader, that the Intention of this is not to degrade or in the leaſt diſparage the Holy Scriptures, but rather to free them from an unneceſſary load of Objections, and render them more uſeful to the chief purpoſes for which, I humbly apprehend, they were deſign'd; and hope thus much may ſerve to occaſion ſome more accurate Enquiry into this important ſubject; which has indeed been frequently diſcuſs'd in different parts of the Chriſtian World, but never, as far as I know, with the fairneſs, freedom and impartiality which the thing requires: and whether this be a proper time to canvaſs it thoroughly, whether the generality be qualify'd to form more juſt and clear conceptions of it now than formerly, is with all poſſible deference ſubmitted to better judges.

varies

varies from it, and yet is very apt to ſlip into its place; the commonly receiv'd *traditional* one. This Doctrine we learn from thoſe very Adverſaries which in the former we were ſtriving to oppoſe: and though indeed it have a ſhew of deference to public Wiſdom and *Humility*, yet in time probably may be attended with no better Conſequences; if Men cannot diſtinguiſh pure, primitive *Chriſtianity* from that which oft may happen not to be ſuch, and through which the other too often ſuffers; and if in this, which of all things is moſt deſerving of their Care and Caution, they will content themſelves with the Senſe of the Multitude; and take that for a ſure, ſufficient Rule, which they know to be far from even excuſing thoſe who have means of judging for themſelves; and which they would be extremely unwilling to abide by in almoſt any other caſe. — But I ſhould be ſorry to be found ſo far contradicting my main deſign, as to make things in any reſpect, worſe at preſent than they really are. On this Subject, I could hardly avoid hinting at ſome few of thoſe Impediments that ſeem to lie moſt in our way to Perfection: but notwithſtanding theſe, or any others which could be produced, I muſt beg leave to conclude, that we have

have Encouragement enough left to proceed with chearfulneſs and vigour in it; till every thing which lets, in God's good time be taken away, and true Religion, Righteouſneſs, and Virtue ſhine in perfect Beauty: *till we all come in the Unity of the Faith and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the meaſure of the Stature of the Fulneſs of Chriſt.*

A DISCOURSE UPON THE LIFE and CHARACTER OF *CHRIST.*

A DISCOURSE UPON THE LIFE and CHARACTER OF CHRIST.

A Diſcourſe of the Life and Character of *Chriſt*.

JOHN 20. 30, 31.

And many other ſigns truly did JESUS *in the preſence of his Diſciples, which are not written in this Book.*

But theſe are written, that ye might believe that JESUS *is the* CHRIST, *the Son of God; and that believing ye might have Life thro' his Name.*

THESE two Verſes, if they did not originally conclude the Goſpel of St. *John*, as ſome learned Men have thought; * are however ſo far parallel to thoſe words which now ſtand at the end of this, and probably refer to it jointly with the three other Goſpels, that they ſerve equally to inform us what the true intention of their writers was, *viz.* not to give a complete accountof all the things that

* Vid. *Grot.* et *Cleric.* in loc. add *Critical Notes*, p. 79.

Jeſus did,[a] much leſs of all the reaſons and occaſions of them; but only to record ſo many naked *Facts*, * of each kind, as would be abundantly ſufficient to lay a ſure Foundation for our Faith in his divine Miſſion, and by that Faith lead us to eternal Happineſs.

[a] How far this was from being ſo, may be ſeen in *Le Clerc.* Harm. Diſſ. p. 587. from *Joh.* 2. 3.— Add 1 *Cor.* 15. 5. The ſame appears to be the caſe with ſeveral of our bleſſed Saviour's *Reaſonings*, where the Evangeliſts, particularly St. *John*, 'uſe a ſhortneſs of ſtile, and for the 'moſt part may be ſuppoſed not to relate them at large, 'as they were ſpoken, but to ſet down the principal 'Heads thereof, leaving their conciſeneſs to be ſupplied 'by the care and attention of the devout Reader.' *Clagett*'s Serm. V. 3. p. 88. where a remarkable Inſtance is produced to this purpoſe.

* 'To make evident who that Maſter was, whoſe Diſ-'ciples they profeſs'd themſelves, their buſineſs was to 'tell, how they knew him, what Miracles he had wrought, 'and all thoſe other particulars which we read in their 'Goſpels; in which they made uſe of no Diſquiſitions, 'but in a plain and faithful Narrative declared their 'Knowledge of thoſe Matters. And this looks like the 'ſingular Care and Wiſdom of Divine Providence, that 'nothing of human Invention might be ſaid to be mix'd 'with the Goſpel; which could not have been prevented, 'had the Apoſtles in their Writings ſet down not only 'what they themſelves had ſeen, but their Conjectures 'alſo, and Deductions from the Actions and Sayings of 'our Saviour.' *Le Clerc.* Harm. Diſſ. p. 611. Comp. *Jaquelot* de la Verité et de l'Inſpiration des Livres du Vet. et N. T. Part 2. c. 6. p. 301, 305, &c.

And

And indeed the Account which we find there deliver'd, plain as it is and ſimple; is yet in itſelf of ſo very extraordinary a Nature, and exhibits ſuch an important and amazing Scene of Wiſdom, Power and Goodneſs, as muſt, when duly attended to, convince us that it could have no leſs than a Divine Original.

What I propoſe at preſent is to conſider theſe *Signs* of Jeſus in their utmoſt Latitude, as comprehending the ſeveral Circumſtances of his Life, whereby he proved himſelf to be the very *Chriſt*; gave evidence of his Authority to undertake, and really accompliſhed the Work of our Redemption. I ſhall endeavour to lay before you ſuch a general View of this Tranſaction, as may help to diſcover the fitneſs and propriety of our Saviour's Conduct in the whole.

Let us begin where the beloved Diſciple dates his Goſpel, (who had much higher Manifeſtations, and a more perfect Knowledge of his Maſter, than any other of the Evangeliſts;) and with him reflect a little on his *original State* and *ſubſequent Humiliation*[b]. That a Being

[b] 'To a Being who exiſted, *before* his Birth, in ſome 'happier State, the *whole* of the embodied State may be 'regarded as one *continued* Act of *Humiliation*, and in a 'Senſe, as one uninterrupted Scene of *Suffering*.' *J. N. Scott's*

of infinite Glory and Perfection, the Image of the inviſible God, the firſt-born of every Creature, and the Lord of Heaven and Earth, ſhould condeſcend to degrade himſelf from all this Power and Dignity; *diveſt himſelf* [c] of every glorious Attribute, and appear not only in the *Form*, but *real Nature* of Man, and in its moſt imperfect and forlorn Eſtate; —under all the Wants, and Weakneſſes, and Pains of Infancy [d]! That he ſhould be content to re-

Scott's Serm. V. 2. p. 164. That our B. Saviour had ſuch an Exiſtence is fully demonſtrated by the ingenious Author of *the Glory of Chriſt as God-man diſplay'd*: but that this Pre-exiſtence was in a *Human* Soul, will not perhaps be ſo readily admitted.

[c] *Phil.* 2. 7. ἑαυτον ἐκενωσε, *emptied*, exinanivit, *Greg. Nyſſ.* in 1 *Cor.* 15. Evacuavit, *Hieron.* in *Gal.* 3. 13. Perhaps this may be underſtood in the moſt literal Senſe. See *Glory of Chriſt as God-man*, p. 222. 236, &c.

[d] This Circumſtance of our Saviour's ſubmitting to be reduced to ſo low a State as that of a *common Infant* on his entrance into this World, inſtead of raiſing all that grateful Admiration which ſo wonderful a thing requires, has of late been turn'd to ſhock the Faith of Believers, and become the great Scoff and Stumbling-block of Infidels. But tho' we cannot preſume to account for the whole of that extraordinary Tranſaction, [the Knowledge whereof is probably in a great meaſure reſerv'd for the next Life;] yet may we, I think, eaſily aſſign ſome obvious Reaſons why he ſhould appear in this manner rather than another. 1. In order to prepare the World for his Reception, to keep up an Expectation of him, as well as to diſtinguiſh him

cover his former Qualities again one by one, in ſlow Degrees *, and mix'd with all the Infir-

him when he did appear, and give a laſting Proof that he was really come; the ſeveral Qualifications of his Perſon, and chief Circumſtances of his Advent, were at large deſcribed long before: it was promis'd in particular, that he ſhould be of the Seed of *Abraham*, Tribe of *Judah*, Family of *David*, &c. But if he had appear'd at firſt in an adult State, he would have had no more relation to one Tribe or Family than another: if what ſome of the *Jews* advanc'd, from their *Traditions* [*Joh.* 7. 27. V. *Whitby.* comp. Bp. of *Durh.* Def. p. 250. and Vind. p. 429.] that when *Chriſt* cometh, *no Man knoweth whence he is*, were true, it would have been impoſſible for any ſuch Prophecies as theſe to have been accompliſh'd, and extremely difficult for the People to whom he was primarily ſent, much more for others, ever to have come to a ſufficient certainty about him. 2. It appears from all God's Diſpenſations to Mankind, that tho' there be Evidence ſufficient to convince impartial Judgements, yet there is none of ſuch a Nature as would utterly confound their Underſtandings, and compel their Aſſent. Now had Chriſt come from Heaven in the full brightneſs of his Father's Glory, attended with a numerous Hoſt of Angels; [in ſome ſuch manner as the *Jeſuit* Miſſionary was pleas'd to repreſent to his *Chineſe* Auditory. *Millar* Prop. Chriſt. V. 2. p. 291, *&c.*] or had he enter'd this World in a way wholly new and marvellous; had he made his very firſt Appearance among the chief *Jews* in a State of Maturity, publickly declaring who he was, and wherefore he was ſent, and inſtantly demanding their Submiſſion by a ſuitable train of moſt ſtupendous Miracles, ſo that none of them ſhould have been able either to miſtake or reſiſt him; this Me-

* Luke 2. 52. V. *Whitby.*

mities of Childhood! that after he had receiv'd ſuch Wiſdom and Knowledge as was far above

thod, beſide its giving too much countenance to the wrong Notions they had already entertain'd of the Meſſiah's Kingdom, — its encouraging them to come into it upon Principles entirely oppoſite to its true Conſtitution, and contradicting the moſt noble and eſſential parts of his Deſign, [*viz.* his *purifying* (*Mal.* 3. 2, 3. V. *Pocock*) ſome of them, and ſuffering others to perſiſt (*Luke* 2. 34. V. *Clarke*) in their willful *Ignorance* (*Acts* 3. 17. 1 *Cor.* 2. 8.) and harden'd Unbelief, in order thereby to bring about the greateſt Benefit to Mankind in general. V. Note *f* below, and *Conſiderations*, p. 157.] this Method would have been too violent and overbearing to have left any room for real Merit, any exercife of the chief moral Virtues in thoſe who adhered to him upon ſuch an immediate View; and the Relation of it would have been of too ſelfiſh and ſuſpicious a ſort ever to engage the Belief of diſtant Ages and Nations: it would have been far every way from affording any competent Tryal of that fair, humble, upright and ingenuous Temper, which is the chief Glory and Happineſs of each ſincere Worſhipper of God; the Diſcovery whereof was to be one great end of the Meſſiah's Office (*Luke* 2. 34, 35. V. *Cleric.*) and to encourage and reward which, is the true aim of all religious Diſpenſations.

Many unanſwerable Reaſons have been given why it ſhould ſeem fitting that the Son of God, were he to viſit and converſe with us, ſhould condeſcend to conform himſelf in ſeveral reſpects to Beings of our Frame, and for a time become like one of them; tho' that muſt needs imply great Degradation and Abaſement in him; why then may not we ſuppoſe this to have been the caſe in all reſpects, (Sin only excepted,) without any juſt Imputation either

the Situation he appear'd then in, he ſhould nevertheleſs continue under a ſilent Subjection to his Parents, in a ſervile, low, laborious Employment, for the beſt part of thirty Years! that when he enter'd on his Miniſtry, and was endow'd with full Powers for the due Diſcharge of it, and able to deſtroy his ſeveral Adverſaries with a ſingle Word, he ſhould ſtill undergo the various Aſſaults of each of theſe, the ſubtle Stratagems and ſpiteful Oppoſition of Devils! the Contradiction and Contempt of ſinful Men; which eagerly purſued him for no cauſe but one that merited a very different Return, *viz.* his attempting to reſcue them from their Captivity to Sin and *Satan*, and reſtore them to the *Liberty of the Sons of God*; his labouring to perſwade them to accept their own Salvation! When in the Proſecution of this Deſign he meets with a moſt unkind Reception from the Governours of that Nation to which he immediately directs himſelf, inſtead of publickly diſplaying all the Powers with which he

either on his Purity or perfect Wiſdom? Since any kind of Communication between ſuch a Divine Perſon and Creatures of ſo low a Claſs, will infer ſome very conſiderable Humiliation in him; ſhould not all Arguments againſt it, merely drawn from the *Degree* of that Humiliation, be eſteem'd of little weight?

was inveſted, and admitting all that Homage which the high Character of ſuch a Meſſenger from Heaven muſt have commanded from the Multitude, but ill comported with the Ends for which he came, and with the Doctrine he had to deliver * : — Inſtead, I ſay, of accepting that due Tribute of Eſteem and Veneration, which muſt naturally attend the opening his Divine Commiſſion with the more plain, undeſigning People, but which would have no other Effect upon the invincible Prejudices of their Rulers, than to increaſe their Oppoſition, give them occaſion to miſrepreſent him ſtill the more, and grow more violent in perſecuting all his Followers: — He mercifully chuſes to avoid every thing of this kind that might raiſe their Envy [e], and exaſperate their Malice; concealing his Pre-eminence under the mean Garb of

* See *Collier* Diſc. 3.

[e] To name one Inſtance out of many. A ſtrong Proof of this appears in his forbidding the leprous Perſon to divulge the manner of his Cure, [as he did others in like caſes;] and likewiſe in ordering him to preſent himſelf to the Examination of the *Prieſt*, who was to judge of, and bear teſtimony to his being cured by a Divine Power; and who might otherwiſe have taken occaſion to complain of him as a Violator of the Law, and an Invader of the ſacerdotal Office. *Matt.* 8. 4. *Mark* 1. 44. *Luke* 5. 14. See *Le Clerc*'s Harm. p. 92. or his Addition to *Hammond* on *Matt.* 8. 4. Add Note *l* below.

Po-

Poverty, and confining his Wonders for the moſt part to private Places and obſcure Villages, till he had done enough to aſcertain the Evidence and eſtabliſh the Belief of his Divine Authority amongſt them; till he was ready to finiſh all that remain'd for him to do in a more publick manner, by witneſſing his laſt *good Confeſſion* both to the *Jewiſh* and the *Roman* Magiſtrate; by declaring the true End of his coming into this World, and bearing Teſtimony to his moſt unblameable Life in it, before theſe as iniquitous Judges; and (which was the neceſſary Conſequence of that, without either violently over-ruling them, or miraculouſly eſcaping from them) ſealing the ſame Confeſſion with his Blood [f].

[f] Tho' I here mention only one End of our Saviour's Death, *viz.* the Confirmation of that important Truth, of his being the *Meſſiah*, which he had publickly declared, and which Declaration more immediately occaſion'd it; yet I would not have this underſtood excluſively of any others, which may appear to be imply'd under that Character; particularly that of a *propitiatory Sacrifice*, which has been intimated above [*Conſiderations*, p. 58.] and which is ſtill perhaps defenſible, if taken in the way propoſed [p. 59. *n. d.*] *viz.* as a *Scheme of Government*, a moral Conſtitution or Appointment of the Deity; a merciful Expedient to ſecure the great end of his Government, and ſatisfy the Intention of his Laws; a ſignal Branch of that Oeconomy in Man's Salvation which is moſt apt to let us into

Conſiſtently with the ſame Plan, the Perſons he choſe for Partners and Companions in this

into the depths of Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs, and lead us to ſome ſuitable Imitation of them; and which accordingly the Scripture repreſents as flowing originally from the unbounded Love of God, as an Effect of his own free Grace and unmerited Bounty; not as being abſolutely neceſſary in itſelf, or as implying that infinite Satisfaction to vindictive Juſtice, that complete Payment of the Debt by a Price of equal Value, which leaves no room for Grace or Bounty; and whereof the Scripture ſeems to take no kind of notice. 'Not as an *Equivalent, without which God* 'could not, and *with which he could not but* pardon Sin, '[for the Scripture no where ſpeaks of Satisfaction *in that* '*Senſe*, as ſome have erroneouſly conceiv'd;] but as an '*Atonement* which the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God 'was pleaſed freely to appoint, and freely to accept, as 'ſupreme Governour of the Univerſe.' Dr. *Clarke* Serm. 52. p. 341. Fol. Nor is the great Work of Man's Redemption put entirely upon this ſingle Act of our Saviour, but rather on his whole Miniſtry, his univerſal *Righteouſneſs*; which is placed in full Oppoſition to the *Sin of Adam*; *as by the* Offence *of one, Judgement came upon all Men to Condemnation, even ſo by the* Righteouſneſs *of one, the* free Gift *came upon all Men unto Juſtification of Life*, &c. *Rom.* 5. 18, 19. V. *Taylor in loc.*

Nevertheleſs as in that caſe, *Adam*'s firſt Act of *Diſobedience* had its particular Penalty annex'd [*viz. Death*, denounc'd by way of poſitive Penalty, tho' perhaps naturally fit upon foreſight of the caſe, and in ſome other Views expedient for a State of Diſcipline;] and greater ſtreſs laid on it than any ſubſequent ones, probably becauſe it was the firſt, and made way for all others: ſo in the Death of *Chriſt*, that laſt and higheſt inſtance of *Obe-*

dience,

Work were of the loweſt Claſs, as well in Station, as Abilities; and who could only fol-

dience, (*Phil.* 2. 8.) more Efficacy ſeems to be attributed to it, it being the Completion (*Joh.* 19. 30.) of his undertaking to remove the Effects of that original, as well as of all ſubſequent Tranſgreſſions: —More, I ſay, ſeems to be placed in that than any of the reſt, tho' they are equally neceſſary and eſſential parts of his Office, and therefore always to be taken together with it. Some indeed underſtand no more by *Chriſt*'s Dying for us than the voluntary laying down of his Life, as an *Example* of ſuch Obedience to us, or a *Teſtimony* to the Truth of all his Doctrine; and in that ſenſe *for our Benefit*; which was no doubt greatly ſo, and as ſuch of great Merit with the Father; but not, I think, ſo peculiar to *Chriſt* in that, as in the other Light, in which it is more uſually placed: nor does the former ſeem ſufficient to account for all thoſe Terms made uſe of in deſcribing it by way of *Ranſom*, and the *Price* of our Redemption from Death; as the *Purchaſe* of a Reſurrection to another Life and a new ſtate of Trial; as reaching *beyond* the Curſe entail'd on us by the firſt *Adam*, and raiſing us to a Condition above that from which he fell (*Rom.* 5. 15. 20, *&c.*). Which therefore imply *greater Benefit*, and *more abundant Grace*; not only tending to *qualify* us for ſuch Privileges, but actually *procuring* and *conveying* them to us: and this, as Dr. *Clarke* ſays, 'the Scripture every where expreſſes as *fully* as it is 'poſſible almoſt to be expreſſed in Words.' *ib.* p. 346.

'Tis true, ſuch Terms as *Ranſom*, *Redemption*, *Buying*, *Purchaſe*, &c. are ſometimes uſed in a more lax ſignification, and without any proper *Price* [*Exod.* 6. 6. *Deut.* 7. 8. 2 *Sam.* 7. 23. *Pſ.* 77. 15, *&c.* V. *Taylor* in *Rom.* p. 7.] but where the *Conſideration* is expreſsly aſſign'd and inſiſted on, as in the preſent caſe [*Matt.* 20. 28. 1 *Cor.* 6. 20. 7. 23. *Heb.*

low him at firſt upon the loweſt Views, and would at every turn be urging and impatient to

Heb. 9. 28.] this ſeems to confine the Words more cloſely to their original Import [V. omnino *Guſſet.* com. L. Ebr. *in voce* נאל p. 158.], and carries our Thoughts to ſomething farther than a *Figure of Speech.* It muſt likewiſe be confeſs'd, that *Chriſt*'s mediatorial Office is compared to many other things under the *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation, to the Mercy-ſeat, Oblation, and ſeveral ſorts of Sacrifice, *&c.* to which the Apoſtles allude ſometimes in their Deſcription of it, as anſwering to, or exceeding ſuch in many of its ſalutary Effects; but then it ought to be acknowledg'd alſo, that to this of *Atonement* Reference is had more frequently, and in a more peculiar manner, in ſetting forth the Ends of his Death, to which it therefore muſt be ſuppoſed to bear a nearer and more ſtrict relation; God being pleas'd to '*order that it ſhould be repreſented and regarded as ſuch*, 'nay deſcribed in the ſtrongeſt ſacrifical Phraſes, ſince it 'anſwer'd *completely* all the rational purpoſes that ſuch 'could ever ſerve.' *Foſter*, Uſefulneſs, *&c.* p. 332. 334. And notwithſtanding the Difference between this and any of theſe in ſome reſpects, as that the chief End of *Chriſt*'s Suffering was unknown to the ſeveral Inſtruments employ'd therein, but rather permitted to follow, as it were on courſe, from the perverſe Malice of the *Jews*, and without any ſuch Intention either in them, or in the *Romans*, as accompanied the formal offering up a *Sacrifice*; yet was all this abundantly ſupply'd by *Chriſt* himſelf, [V. *Outram.* L. 2. c. 3. p. 286. Ed. *Amſt.* or *Whitby* on *Joh.* 17. 19. and *Heb.* 2. 11.] who was alone the Offerer, the Sacrificer and the Sacrifice; who by the *loud* Voice with which he utter'd his laſt Words (*Pool* on *Matt.* 27. 50.] and other Circumſtances (*Matt.* 26. 53. *Joh.* 18. 6.) ſhew'd that his Life was not violently taken from him,

[nor

have theſe accompliſhed; nor were they to be let into his real Aim, but by ſlow Steps, and

[nor a Period put to it merely by the *common Courſe of things. Hallet* Diſc. V. 2. p. 285.] but voluntarily reſign'd into his Father's Hand, as he had before ſignified, *Joh.* 10. 18. and his Death thereby, according to his own Requeſt, accepted, and placed to a higher account than any other Sacrifice could be; turn'd to an univerſal Benefit to all Mankind, and render'd of more Value in the ſight of God than all their Performances of this kind put together. It is not then in *alluſion* only to theſe legal Sacrifices that the Death of *Chriſt* is thus deſcribed; but rather they themſelves were appointed to allude to and adumbrate it. See Bp. *Butler*, Analogy, Part 2. c. 2. ſ. 6. The *Jews* indeed had been long uſed to the ſacrifical Language, and were well acquainted with the ſeveral Circumſtances of that way of Worſhip; 'tis alſo certain as A.B. *Tillotſon* obſerves [V. 1. p. 478. Fol.] that 'an Apprehen-'ſion and Perſwaſion had very early and univerſally ob-'tain'd among Mankind, concerning the Expiation of 'Sin, and appeaſing the offended Deity by Sacrifices:' but I cannot think it equally clear that this great Diſpenſation was [though in its own Nature every way fit, and independently a moſt wiſe and good meaſure, yet] framed in ſuch a manner purely in *condeſcenſion* and *compliance* with that pre-eſtabliſh'd Notion; ſince the ſame Author in another place allows theſe to have been 'only Types and 'Shadows of the true expiatory Sacrifice.' V. 2. p. 129. And there ſeems to be no leſs Difficulty in accounting for the Eſtabliſhment of this ſame ſolemn Uſage among the *Jews*, and 'God Almighty's either poſſeſſing Mankind 'with this Principle, or permitting them to be ſo per-'ſwaded,' *ib.* V. 1. p. 480. if it was not in order to *a better Covenant*, an higher and more noble Inſtitution fix'd in the

after a long Series of gentle Diſcipline. Such Perſons were in many reſpects moſt difficult to

the Divine Decrees before the other took place in the World. V. *Conſiderations*, Not. *c.* p. 206. There muſt indeed be ſome Ideas common to both theſe, or elſe one could be no kind of Introduction to the other; but to go backward in accommodating this to that, the latter to the former, the more perfect Inſtitution to the leſs, ſeems not ſo very natural a Suppoſition; granting the firſt to be any Divine Inſtitution at all, of which before. *Conſiderations*, p. 58. Not. *c.* &c. And to attempt a Solution by admitting both, *viz.* that this Inſtitution may have been originally Divine [as the ſame Author does, p. 478.] looking forward to the great Atonement, and leading Mankind to an Apprehenſion of it; at the ſame time allowing that Atonement itſelf to have a retroſpect to ſuch Apprehenſion, and to be grounded thereon, ſeems to be making matters worſe, by arguing merely in a Circle, and leaving the whole without any proper ground at all. Nor, laſtly, is the Sacrifice of the Death of *Chriſt* to be reſolv'd into a mere *popular* Phraſe, or *metaphorical* Expreſſion, as when one Man is vulgarly ſaid to be *ſacrificed* to another's Pleaſure, Intereſt, or the like. Nor can thoſe numerous Texts which are commonly produced on this occaſion, and ſeem all to denote ſomething *vicarious*, be eaſily explain'd in any other ſenſe; tho' much indeed has been done this way lately by a very honeſt and able Writer. I would then have *all* that *Chriſt* did and ſuffer'd taken into the general Plan of our Redemption, but yet not ſo as to eclipſe and overlook that part of his Suffering which ſeems to be principally inſiſted on, to have a peculiar Province and extraordinary Efficacy annex'd to it in Scripture. I would not drop that View which ſo many Paſſages in their moſt obvious meaning point out to us, which naturally

lead,

be dealt with, but no unfit Inſtruments for that which they were then deſigned for; namely,

lead, and therefore were deſign'd to lead us to ſome diſtinct *Scheme* (as was ſaid before) or different part of the Scheme; different in certain reſpects, tho' of the ſame Kind or Quality as to Morals with the reſt; the moſt ſublime, myſterious Branch of our Redeemer's Office; nay, that alone which ſtrictly and properly denominates it ſuch: but ſtill a Plan of moral Diſcipline and rational Government; in its own Nature exquiſitely calculated to help and enable, to excite and encourage us to *work out our Salvation*; not as mechanically working it out for us, or arbitrarily transferring the Acts and Attainments of one Perſon to another, without any real ground of Reſemblance, or Conformity between them; tho' we are ſorry to find theſe and the like foreign, unſcriptural Notions often moſt unhappily mix'd with the preſent Subject. The common Inſtance brought to illuſtrate this Point, of a King's Son conſenting to endure ſome of the Pain and Ignominy due to Rebels, in order to reſtore them, upon Submiſſion, to the Favour of their Sovereign, and reinſtate them in the Privileges of the Community: [*Tillotſon*, V. 1. p. 485--6.] may anſwer to ſome part of it, provided that his Sufferings extend no farther than the King is able to make up to him, and reward him for; or even that of one School-boy's Performance being admitted to procure a Remiſſion from Labour or Puniſhment for all the reſt; [*Taylor* on *Rom.* 125.] which tho' it may be thought a very low Compariſon, and at firſt ſight appears every way infinitely inadequate to the reality, yet as there ſtated, ſerves to convey many clear Ideas of the thing in general; and after all, may come as near perhaps to a juſt Repreſentation of it, as our moſt elevated Apprehenſions can reach in the preſent State of Ignorance and Imperfection; wherein

to teſtify what they had ſo often ſeen and heard; and on all accounts moſt proper to afford the beſt, moſt unexceptionable Evidence to Futurity: ſuch as could by no means be ſuppoſed capable either to conceive a Scheme ſo great as

wherein we are forced in a great meaſure yet to ſpeak and think as Children, (and ought to be ever ſenſible that we do ſo) upon ſuch a Subject; in which we are neither made acquainted with the *whole of the Caſe*, nor competent Judges of it if we were, nor actively concern'd to know it. See Bp. *Butler*, *ib.* p. 311, 312. 8vo. Tho' ſo much may perhaps be now communicated to us, as is ſufficient to lay a Foundation for our future Bliſs in contemplating the ſame thing hereafter, under its various Relations and remote Connexions, 'when a more glorious 'and extenſive View of it will open to us, and we be able 'both to comprehend it clearly, and ſee the Propriety of 'thus much being laid before us even in this Life, tho' 'not to be fully underſtood till the next.' *Thoughts on Educ.* p. 41. Nor is there, probably, ſo great a Difference between many of the means made uſe of in the Government, and *training up of ſuch Societies of little Men* (*Taylor*, *ib.* p. 48.) and ourſelves, as we are apt to imagine. — But ſtill, however imperfectly this wonderful Work of Man's Redemption be explain'd or comprehended by us, yet as it is all along propoſed to us under the Image of *Atonement*, or *propitiatory Sacrifice*, ſomething of this kind muſt, I humbly conceive, be included in our Conſideration of it; we ſhould ſeem obliged to retain ſo much of the forementioned Image as can fairly be adapted to it; ſo much as is neceſſary in ſome reſpect to entitle it both to the Name and Notion: which is all that I am here contending for.

that

that of reforming *a World*; of altering all its Cuſtoms and Opinions; or entertain the leaſt Hope of accompliſhing it whenever ſuggeſted to them: ſuch as wanted both Courage and Conduct to attempt this vaſt, and truly original Deſign, with any Proſpect of Succeſs: ſuch, laſtly, as he muſt ſuffer often to doubt, and diſpute with him; to diſtruſt, deſert, and even deny him: To convince After-ages, that they were ſuch as could not with the leaſt Shew of Reaſon be ſuſpected of having at firſt concerted all this of themſelves, or carried it on afterwards among themſelves, or effected what they did of it by any Methods merely human.[t] With ſuch as theſe did *Chriſt* hold Converſation during the whole Courſe of his Miniſtry, affectionately complying with their weakneſs, patiently enduring their perverſeneſs, in order to cure them both; to ſtrengthen and increaſe their Faith by degrees, and free them from all ſuperſtitious Fears; to open their Eyes, and en-

[t] Mirum eſt quam parum acuti eſſent Apoſtolorum nonnulli; ſed datâ operâ tales a Chriſto electos fuiſſe veriſimile eſt; ne dum putabant ſe intelligere quis eſſet quidve moliretur, quidpiam ingenio ſuo freti quod Evangelio noceret, aggrederentur; neve poſſent Dogmatum, quæ nunciabantur, inventores haberi. *Cleric.* in *Joh.* 14. 7.

large their Underſtandings ſo far, that at length they might *even of themſelves judge what was right*, and teach the ſame to others. To theſe, and by them to the World, he ſets a perfect Pattern of true Heroiſm, *viz.* Humility and Reſignation to the Will of God; of Meekneſs and the moſt extenſive Benevolence to Man; demonſtrating to what height Virtue may be carried under the moſt diſadvantageous Circumſtances, and ſhewing the practicableneſs of each part of our Duty in the greateſt Difficulties. With the utmoſt Zeal and Conſtancy does he endeavour to diſſwade and drive Men from their Ruin, and in the moſt endearing manner ſtrive to draw and win them over to their true Intereſt and Happineſs; and raiſe their Minds above the little Intereſts of this World. *Little Children, yet a little while I am with you,—— but let not your Hearts be troubled, I go to prepare a Place for you. Ye are not of the World, even as I am not of the World. In the World ye ſhall have Tribulation; but be of good Cheer, I have overcome the World.* [h]

[h] For a Specimen of that inimitable *Tenderneſs* and intenſe *Devotion*, which made ſo diſtinguiſhing a Part of our B. Saviour's *Character*, and which contributed ſo greatly to the Comfort and Support of his Diſciples under all their Trials; I refer to thoſe admirable Chapters of St. *John*'s Goſpel, part of the 13th and the 4 following; and

Having deny'd himſelf the Comforts and Enjoyments of this World, in the ſame Cauſe for which he left the Glories of the other, and at length laid down his Life in executing of that Scheme for which he firſt aſſumed it; he does not even here quit the ſame merciful Deſign, but raiſes himſelf to revive the Hopes of his deſponding Followers, to comfort and confirm them in the Faith, and give them full Aſſurance, that he now had all Power in Heaven and Earth. And great Occaſion was there for ſuch Ground of Comfort to them, who thought they had loſt him, for whoſe ſake they had parted with all Things beſide; greater yet to reform and rectify their Notions of, and Expectations from him, which were ſtill fix'd on preſent Proſpects of Advancement, notwithſtanding whatſoever he had taught them to the contrary: [i] nor could they help concluding that

and appeal to the Experience of even the coldeſt and moſt careleſs Reader, whether he can help being in ſome meaſure ſtill affected by them; particularly the laſt.

[i] That the true Scope of his whole Sermon on the Mount was to correct the carnal Notions they had of the *Meſſiah*'s Kingdom, and the bad Diſpoſitions they were under in conſequence thereof; and that this is the right *Key* for opening the proper Meaning and Connexion of that Sermon, is demonſtrated at large by Mr. *Blair*, in his moſt excellent Paraphraſe on the 5, 6, and 7 Chapters

he would at this time certainly make uſe of all his Power, in the entire Deſtruction of his and their Enemies; and the Erecting of the ſo long look'd for Kingdom, to which every other Kingdom of the Earth ſhould bow. But he ſoon ſhews them how far this was from being any Part of his Office, as deſcribed by the Prophets; how utterly inconſiſtent with his whole Behaviour in diſcharging it: that on his very firſt Entrance on it he had rejected and deſpiſed the Offer of theſe Kingdoms, and their Glory; and that for the future they muſt think of renouncing all their national prejudices of peculiar temporal Privileges, Conqueſt and Dominion, Wealth and Power: that inſtead of coming a *Meſſiah* to bleſs his People in their Senſe [which would have been a Curſe to every other People,] by diſtinguiſhing them from the reſt of Mankind in things to which they had no better Title, and of which they were not like to make any better Uſe; by not only delivering them from their Subjection to all other Nations, but reducing every Nation into an abſolute Subjection to them: — that he

of St. *Matt.* and throughout his Diſcourſes on that Subject. — That it contains all Things, that were then wanting and neceſſary to the Salvation of thoſe Hearers, to whom our Saviour then addreſs'd himſelf. Ib. V. 4. S. 20. p. 301.

was

was to bring them Bleſſings and Deliverances of quite another kind; to bleſs them by turning every one of them from their *Iniquities*, and ſo reſtoring them to the Divine Favour; to deliver them from their ſpiritual Chains of Darkneſs, Death, and Miſery; and bring them to *the Light of Life*, and Happineſs immortal in his heavenly Kingdom: a way to which they were to be the Means of opening to all the reſt of the World, inviting Mankind in general to enter with them into it; as their Forefathers had been the great Inſtruments of leading men to the Knowledge of that one true God, who is the Giver of it. That as theſe his Followers had all along ſeen ample Proofs of his Divine Legation to this Purpoſe, and were now to be let into the Nature and Deſign of his Undertaking [k], ſo far as they were able to bear a Part

[k] I find ſome Perſons often complaining that they want to know diſtinctly *what* this *Undertaking* of our Saviour's was; what it was that Chriſt really *did* and *taught*; and what is his *Religion*. The former has in part been touch'd upon above, Note f. To the latter, I think, an Anſwer may be drawn from p. 121, *&c.* of *Conſiderations*, to this purpoſe: He came with full Credentials from the *Father*, to tranſact our Peace and Union with him; to proclaim an entire *Amneſty* for paſt Offences, and procure an effectual *Remedy* againſt the Dominion of any future ones; to publiſh new Terms of Salvation, [a new Doc-

in it themſelves; ſo they ſhould ſhortly be inveſted with ſufficient Powers to carry it on

trine, ſays *Grotius*, Ep. 33. requiring ſincere Repentance, and promiſing Remiſſion of Sins, and everlaſting Life,] and put us into a Condition of acting up to them; to reſtore a *Communication* between God and us, [by *Prayer* and the *Sacraments*;] to lay down ſufficient Rules for our Behaviour towards God, ourſelves, and one another; to offer the cleareſt and moſt cogent Arguments for our Compliance with theſe, [in the ſeveral Articles of our Belief;] and thereby afford us the moſt ample *Means* and *Motives* to reſemble the Divine Nature, grow in Grace, and qualify ourſelves for unlimited Degrees of Happineſs and Perfection. By his own *Example* pointing out the Way to this; and by his *Doctrine*, in the firſt place, reforming the wrong Judgements and perverſe Diſpoſitions of Mankind in Matters of Religion, [of thoſe more eſpecially among whom he lived; Vid. Note i.] removing the falſe Principles on which they grounded it; the fooliſh Practiſes which they had incorporated with it; and in their ſtead ſubſtituting ſuch important Duties, and directing to the Acquirement of ſuch intrinſically good, virtuous Habits, as would in their own Natures neceſſarily lead to that State of Perfection, and become each an eſſential part thereof: founding the whole upon its proper Baſis, the true LOVE of GOD; and joining all together in that *Bond of Peace and of all Virtues*, CHARITY to Man. The Subſtance therefore, or *Material Part* of *Chriſt*'s Religion contains all that can poſſibly be comprehended under the Notion of pure Religion; whatſoever is really excellent and uſeful in every Station or Relation of Life, with all ſuch Helps as tend to encourage and ſupport us in purſuing this, and are in general neceſſary to the Attainment of it; it admits and includes every thing

without him, and enabled to proclaim and propagate it to the Ends of the Earth. Having thus ſpent forty Days in training and preparing his Diſciples for their future Trials in this great Work of eſtabliſhing a Kingdom of ſo very different a Sort, and to be eſtabliſhed by Ways ſo different from what they had hitherto imagin'd; he meets them all together; leads them out to ſome Diſtance from *Jeruſalem*; takes Leave of them with his laſt Benediction; and having promiſed to give them yet farther Proof of his Care and Love by ſending them another *Comforter*, aſcends viſibly before them into Heaven.

Having taken a ſhort View of our Saviour's Conduct, more particularly in *private Life*, and run over ſome of the Steps of his *Humiliation*; let us ſtop to reflect a little on the Uſe and Excellence of ſuch a *Character*, and obſerve ſome of the Benefits which we receive from this Part of his Conduct.

Whenever we turn our Thoughts upon the infinite Perfections of the moſt high God, and

thing, which either may conduce to the Welfare of Men in the preſent State, or duely fit and diſpoſe them for everlaſting Happineſs in another; and in ſhort, can be deſcribed no otherwiſe, than is done by the two Apoſtles *Phil.* 4. 8. 2 *Pet.* 1. 4, 5, &c. v. *Conſiderations*, *p.* 44.

try to form ſome ſuitable Apprehenſions of them; though they appear well worthy of all Adoration, yet is our View of them but faint and dim, on account of their Sublimity and Diſtance from us; and what Views we have of them are apt rather to excite Aſtoniſhment and Awe, than move the ſofter, more endearing Paſſions: and therefore the Ideas of *loving* and *delighting* in God were ſuch, as the moſt elevated Heathen Writer could not reach.

But here the Deity lets himſelf down as it were to our Capacities, and is on a Level with our tendereſt Affections; diſcovers himſelf under the near Relations of a Friend, a Father; diſplays ſuch an affecting Scene of the moſt merciful, mild Condeſcenſion, as muſt ſtrike even the dulleſt, warm the coldeſt Heart.

The Lord, who knows our Frame, ſees that we are not capable of beholding him in his full Glory, and therefore kindly draws a Veil over it, and ſuits his ſeveral Diſpenſations to the Subjects of them. He ſends a Meſſenger in our own State and Circumſtances; who being encompaſſed with our Infirmities, experiencing our Difficulties and Temptations, and having a fellow-Feeling of our Troubles, might ſhew us how well qualify'd he was to bear with us, and help us to bear them; to have Compaſſion

on

on the Ignorant, and thoſe that were in Error; pointing out to us the true Way, and enabling us to walk therein; leading us gently by the Hand,* inviting and encouraging us to come to God thro' him. *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; he that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father. All that my Father hath is mine: I and my Father are one, as I and you are one. I have not called you Servants, but Friends and Brethren. The Father himſelf loveth you; and if ye love him, as he loveth me, and I love him, we will manifeſt ourſelves to you; we will come unto you, and make our Abode with you.*

Thus he who was to his own People formerly the *Lord of Hoſts*, a mighty God and terrible, jealous, avenging; and whoſe whole Worſhip was ſtiled *Fear*, [a Worſhip well accommodated to ſuch People,] is now to Men of more enlarged Minds, under this proportionably more indulgent Diſpenſation, *the God of all Joy, and Conſolation, the Father of Mercies*, whoſe Children and Heirs we are ſaid to be; whom we are taught to approach in a more liberal Way, with a true *filial* Aſſurance; whoſe darling Attribute is Goodneſs; and the firſt Principle and great Commandment in his

* *Lactant.* de vera Sapientia. L. 4. 24.

Law,

Law, the End and the Completion of it, *Love*. Theſe amiable Repreſentations, confirm'd by a long Train of condeſcending Meekneſs, and illuſtrated in the moſt free, familiar Manner, muſt above all Things tend to ſtrengthen and invigorate our Faith, enliven our Hope, and draw our whole Soul after him that ſo loved us, and lived amongſt us: eſpecially that which muſt ſeem to be the greateſt poſſible Inſtance of Affection for us, his voluntarily laying down his Life, to reconcile us to him and our heavenly Father: this cannot but endear his *Character* to all who are capable of giving Attention to it; and will, in a much more near and tender manner, unite him to us, and make the Memory and Contemplation of him infinitely more affecting, than that of any other Being, however great, good and glorious, who has not undergone the like Office, or appear'd in ſuch Lights to us. And tho' in order to direct our Reaſon and Judgment to the principal Object of religious Worſhip, and guard againſt every Miſconception of our true Relation thereto, we are oft reminded who it was that originally provided this Redemption for us; who *ſo firſt loved the World, as to give his only begotten Son*, for our Salvation; and are taught to refer all ultimately *to the Glory of God the Father:*

yet

yet in that other, no leſs eſſential, [perhaps with the Bulk of Mankind, much ſuperior] Part of our Nature, by which Religion and every thing elſe takes the ſtrongeſt hold of us, the *Paſſions*, are we neceſſarily touch'd in a much more ſenſible Manner with what is ſo very adequate and obvious to our preſent Comprehenſions, and as it were analogous to what we feel among ourſelves; and may be ſatisfy'd that the kind Author of our Being will make due Allowance for this, ſo far as it is neceſſary and unavoidable, which is the Caſe at preſent univerſally; and every one that reflects upon the general Turn of his own Mind in his Devotion, will, I believe, find it ſo: which is an experimental Proof of the Propriety and Beauty of the Plan in this reſpect. And as this Diſpenſation was well ſuited to the Frame of Human Nature, and an Improvement on the foregoing one to the *Jews*; ſo was it no leſs fitly accommodated to the State of the *Heathen* World, and no leſs neceſſary in the Circumſtances under which that then was, and muſt have continued.

The Founders and Supporters of religious Inſtitutes among the *Gentiles* had nothing but ſome empty Apparitions of their idle Deities, or more uncertain Tales, and blind Reports to build

build upon; ſome of them ill deviſed by themſelves, others in great part copied from true Scripture Hiſtory, or primitive Tradition; but all ſo ſtrangely abuſed and blended with each kind of Vice and Folly, to comply with the general Corruption of Mankind, and ſuit them to the ſeveral Taſtes and Tempers of particular Countries, as at length render'd the whole little elſe than a Compound of Abſurdity and Immorality; and made their very Worſhip and Devotion impious. Their Doctrines and ſubſequent Rites muſt by this means be very complicated, and vary according to the various Degrees of Superſtition and Impurity that reign'd amongſt them; but yet were ſo far of the ſame Caſt and Complexion, that there could be no great room for a Competition with each other in point of either Truth, or Excellence: it would be hard to diſtinguiſh between the different ſorts of Evidence and Authority producible in different Places for the one, or of the Reaſons that might be alledg'd to explain, and vindicate the other; ſince *Cuſtom* was the common Plea for both; ſince both were equally uncertain in their Origin, and both alike *unprofitable as pertaining to the Conſcience.* So that when any Species of Idolatry was once eſtabliſh'd in a Nation, it muſt, with the generality,

lity, be either a point of Neceſſity to abide by it, as they could find no better; or appear matter of Indifference whether they ſhould exchange it for any other; or admit that other along with it, as occaſion ſerv'd: And this might well be left to the Determination of the State. — Such were the Circumſtances of the Heathen World, when *Chriſt* appear'd to put an end to all thoſe *lying Vanities*, and turn Men to *the living and true God*; by introducing a Syſtem of Religion ſuitable to ſuch a Being, and which would lead them to the Love and Likeneſs of him.

Farther, Men had been ſo long uſed to the Notion of Appearances and Meſſages from Heaven, and theſe had been made the ground of every Article of Faith and Mode of Worſhip, that nothing but a *real one*, one of a ſuperior kind and better circumſtanc'd, could be conceiv'd effectual to ſilence every wild Pretence of that ſort, and reduce Men to a right Faith and a ſuitable Practiſe: nothing leſs would be able to lead ſuch to a firm Belief in one true, ſpiritual, inviſible God; and induce them to worſhip him *in Spirit and in Truth*; and aſſure them of always finding acceſs to him thro' one only all-ſufficient *Mediator*. Dry, abſtract Reaſoning would go but a little way with the vulgar, who

are

are moſt ſuſceptible of Impreſſion, but yet required ſomething ſtrong and viſible to ſtrike them; nor would a few tranſient Signs and Wonders ſerve to make ſuch Impreſſion laſt. Of theſe they had many reported among them, and the more common ſuch Reports grew, the leſs were they minded; not only on account of their ſuſpicious Evidence, tho' that was enough to diſcredit them; but chiefly for want of Connection with ſome regular courſe of Goodneſs, and a ſett of Doctrines worthy of ſuch Interpoſition from Heaven; and of their being expreſsly produced as Vouchers for theſe Doctrines, and apply'd directly to confirm that Interpoſition.

This did *Chriſt* fully and frequently; in the plaineſt and moſt public manner: and hereby did his Inſtitution outſhine, and extinguiſh every part of Heatheniſm, as well in point of Evidence afforded to it, as of Inſtruction convey'd by it. From whence might be drawn another Proof, both of the Uſefulneſs of ſuch a Plan, and of the great Neceſſity that there was for it.—But I proceed to what we were about to conſider, *viz.* ſome of the remarkable Circumſtances in our Saviour's more *public* Life, and *Manner* of *teaching*. As to the former, we cannot but obſerve a ſurpriſing Mixture of Humility

mility and Greatneſs, Dignity and Self-abaſement in his general Demeanour; both which were equally inſtructive in their Turns. Sometimes we find him ſolemnly aſſerting his Divinity, at other times the meekeſt and the loweſt of the Sons of Men: ſometimes reminding his Followers that he could command Legions of Angels, were it neceſſary; at others appriſing them that he ſhould be more deſtitute of common Conveniencies, than even the Beaſts of the Field, or Birds of the Air: now telling them that a greater than *Solomon* is amongſt them; now waſhing his Diſciples Feet. Conſcious of his own Power and juſt Prerogative, yet all Submiſſion to the Powers in being; complying with their Laws and Inſtitutions, however hazardous, or inconvenient to him; and paying their Demands to the uttermoſt, tho' at the Expence of a Miracle. On ſome Occaſions publiſhing the Character and Office which he bore; on others carefully concealing them, in order to prevent the haſty Miſconſtruction of his Friends, to guard againſt the inveterate Malice of his Foes, and gain ſufficient time to fix a good Foundation for the Faith of all. None more induſtrious and zealous in the Cauſe of God; none more indifferent and reſigned in his own: he patiently endures the Affronts and

Outrage

Outrage to his Perſon, and the frequent Inſults on his Reputation, and intercedes for the Forgiveneſs of his Murderers; yet when his Father's Honour is concern'd, he vindicates it inſtantly, and with uncommon Warmth; he publickly chaſtiſes the Prophaners of his Temple, and threatens the ſevereſt Puniſhment to ſuch as would continue to blaſpheme the Power and Spirit by which he was acting. He is ready to receive Publicans and Harlots; diſdains not to converſe with Heretics and Schiſmatics; Perſons moſt odious and of worſt Repute, but whom he ſees to be truly penitent, and really deſirous of Inſtruction; while he rejects the formal, ſanctimonious Hypocrite, and reprimands the ſelf-ſufficient *Phariſee*. He detects, and with Authority rebukes the Flattery of the proud, deſigning Queriſt; but ſatisfies each Scruple, and reſolves each Doubt of the ſincere and humble Searcher after Truth, before they can be intimated to him. He cheriſhes the broken-hearted; comforts the deſponding; ſtrengthens and ſupports the weak and wavering; condeſcends to the Infirmities of the meaneſt and moſt deſpicable, that has the leaſt Spark of Goodneſs in him; but never gratifies the Vanity, or gives way to the Petulancy of the greateſt. Vice from him meets with due Diſcourage-

couragement and juſt Reproof in all Men, of the higheſt Station; Virtue with kind Compaſſion, and a generous Aid, in any of the loweſt.

For, Secondly, This Mixture of ſo various, and ſeemingly oppoſite Qualities, which conſtituted the foregoing Contraſt, did not proceed from any Variation in his Temper, but wholly in that of thoſe among whom he convers'd. He ſteadily adheres to the ſame Principle, and conſtantly purſues one plain and uniform Deſign, of doing all the Service poſſible, on all Occaſions, to all ſorts of People; of doing it in the moſt agreeable manner too, whenever that becomes conſiſtent with their real Intereſt: ſympathiſing with Men in their ſeveral States and Diſpoſitions; ſuiting himſelf to every one's Circumſtances and Capacity; applying to each part of the human Conſtitution for Acceſs, and watching every Motion of the Heart to gain Admittance: being himſelf ever affable and eaſy of Acceſs to all that ſeriouſly apply'd to him; accepting any Invitation, and admitting every well-meant inſtance of Reſpect; nay, making a voluntary Offer of his Company, whenever he knew it would be uſeful and acceptable: indulging the moſt ſecret Wiſh of ſuch as would receive an Obligation from him; and enhancing

that by his obliging Readineſs to confer it. 'He 'ſubmitted to the loweſt Offices for the ſake of 'others, and was at every body's Service that 'deſired his Aſſiſtance. He condeſcended to the 'meaneſt Company, when he had a Proſpect 'of doing any good upon them, and was con-'tent to loſe the Reputation of being a good 'Man, that he might more effectually ſerve 'the Ends of Piety and Goodneſs[a].' His Converſation was free and familiar, open and undiſguis'd, ſober and rational; his Carriage clear from all affected Singularity, all rigid and unnatural Severity, and any of thoſe auſtere, forbidding Airs, which uſed to be put on by others; and were apt to procure them ſo much Reverence and Awe, upon the like Occaſion. His very miraculous Works were no leſs evident Signs of Mercy, Goodneſs, Generoſity, than of Power; and equally adapted to convince Mens Underſtandings, and engage their Affections, as to remove their Maladies, or to relieve their Wants; his firſt public Miracle being no more than a proper Act of Kindneſs or Humanity, in preventing the Confuſion of a poor Relation by a very ſeaſonable Supply of what was wanting in his Entertainment; which want perhaps could not have otherwiſe been ſupply'd, and was moſt

[a] *Lowth*'s Directions, p. 197.

probably

probably occaſion'd by the extraordinary Concourſe he himſelf drew thither[b]; his laſt being

[b] Notwithſtanding all theſe evident Marks of Goodneſs in this Miracle of our bleſſed Saviour, yet it has met with no leſs bitter and unreaſonable Treatment than any other Circumſtance attending either his Divine Character or Miſſion, even from ſuch as profeſs the higheſt Veneration for the former, and ſeem willing to do Juſtice to it upon ſome Occaſions. Mr. *Chubb* has been at the Pains to revive ſome of *Woolſton*'s Objections on this Head, without either making any Improvements on them, or taking the leaſt notice of the large and clear Anſwers given to them, as is the common caſe with this kind of Writers. He dwells upon the *Harſhneſs*, *Impropriety* and *Fallacioufneſs* of *Chriſt*'s Reply to his Mother, and urges the *Intemperance* which muſt needs have been promoted by this miraculous Production of Wine. *Poſthumous Works*, V. 2. p. 185-6-7-8. As to the *Harſhneſs*, which ariſes chiefly from the coarſe Word, *Woman*, in our Language, he has been ſhewn that γυνη is a Term uſed by the beſt Writers very conſiſtently with the higheſt Reſpect, and as ſuch moſt undoubtedly applied elſewhere to the ſame Perſon. *Jo.* 19. 26. That the Phraſe τι εμοι και σοι, was no more than a common Expreſſion of ſome gentle Rebuke for intermeddling in another's Province. 2 *Sam.* 16. 10. 19. 22. 2 *Kings* 3. 13. and might be exceedingly *proper*, and even neceſſary at *Chriſt*'s firſt opening his Commiſſion, in order to guard againſt any Suſpicion of his Mother's having *concerted Matters with him* (as the ſame Author would inſinuate, p. 186.) to prevent her interfering at all in it, or pretending to any influence or authoritative Direction in the caſe of working Miracles eſpecially. To which we may add, that whatever apparent Slight or Severity occurs in this or any other Circumſtance where ſhe is introduced, may have

no leſs than an Inſtance of the higheſt and moſt undeſerv'd Compaſſion, in healing the

been order'd providentially, or by Divine Foreſight; [as the ſame thing ſeems to have been done on the like account in other caſes, v. 9. that of St. *Peter* more remarkably;] to guard againſt thoſe many groſs Abuſes of her Name and Intereſt, thoſe very grievous Corruptions that in after-times were ſet up in the Church of *Chriſt*, and ſupported chiefly by that near relation which ſhe bore to him according to the Fleſh. As to his *Hour not being come*, *i. e.* of doing any thing for her Benefit in particular; that ſeems to relate wholly to the *Hour* of his Death, agreeably to the common uſe of that Word in the Goſpel, (as has likewiſe been obſerv'd;) which to prevent all ſecular Views he thought good to prepare her for at the very Entrance on his Office; ſignifying that ſhe was to receive no kind of worldly Advantage from it till he left the World; and when that time came, he recommended her accordingly to his beloved Diſciple, who took her to his own Home, and provided for her as if ſhe were his own Mother. So far was *Chriſt*'s Reply from any of that *Fallacy* and *Contradiction in every View*, with which this Author has been pleas'd to charge it, that even in this imperfect View of the Caſe we may be able to diſcern clear Tokens of the ſame Heavenly Wiſdom and Goodneſs here which ſhines out in each of his other Diſcourſes. Nor is there any more ground for that other Suggeſtion of *Exceſs*, from the *Gueſts having drank ſo very freely as to exhauſt Plenty of Wine*, ib. p. 188. ſince from the known Regulations at all Marriage Feaſts there was no Danger of it; from the low Circumſtances of the Perſon entertaining here, no great room to apprehend that any extraordinary Plenty was provided, but rather the contrary: nor from what *Chriſt* ſupply'd, the leaſt Encouragement given to Intemperance during the

Wound of one of thoſe who came to take away his Life.

the Remainder of the Feaſt, which laſted ſeveral Days; and wherein, if we will ſuppoſe that this Wine muſt have been all drank up, as much might eaſily have been conſumed by an extraordinary Conflux of the People in a few Days, as would perhaps have otherwiſe held out the reſt. So little reaſon was there any way for ſuch rude Inſults on this Part of our bleſſed Saviour's Hiſtory, that it might eaſily be ſhewn to be of a piece, and bear the very ſame Characters of Wiſdom and Goodneſs with the reſt. That as the Goſpel was firſt to be offer'd to his own Countrymen (to whom the *Promiſes* were made) whether they would hear or whether they would forbear, and whoſe rejecting of it turn'd to the more immediate Benefit of the reſt of the World; ſo was this public Occaſion very properly made uſe of for the opening of it in the firſt place to his own Kinsfolk and Acquaintance; who had hereby a fair Opportunity of fully canvaſſing its Evidence, and conſulting him upon it, during all the Feſtival; might eaſily have ſatisfy'd each other about the Truth of his Pretenſions, and entitled themſelves to the Honour of being his firſt Diſciples: tho' for no leſs wiſe and good Reaſons they were moſt of them permitted to loſe all ſuch Opportunities of being inſtructed by him, to ſhut their Eyes and harden their Hearts amidſt the cleareſt and the ſtrongeſt Evidence, and at length become of all Men the moſt inveterate both againſt him and his Doctrine: which yet, inſtead of impairing the Credit of either, ſerv'd to illuſtrate it the more, and render it more inconteſtible to others in all Ages; by clearing the whole from all poſſible Suſpicion of any Family-contrivance, of being carried on by private Compact, [as the ſame Conduct in the Rulers did effectually from the Charge of its being any part of

The like might be obſerv'd in almoſt every other caſe, where he exerted an extraordinary

their own national Policy;] or having been calculated for the ſeparate Intereſt of any particular place, or party of men whatſoever. Nay, every one of theſe who either rejected him at firſt, or afterwards forſook him, without ever being able to diſcover the leaſt Circumſtance of ſuch a Deſign, affords a plain Proof of the contrary, as might be made appear beyond all Contradiction.

But thus much may ſerve at preſent for a Specimen of the Judgment and Sagacity of ſome of the greateſt Heroes in the Cauſe of modern Infidelity; who upon ſelecting out of the Goſpels two or three Paſſages of this kind, and ſetting them off with a little Banter, grounded chiefly on their own Ignorance or Inadvertency, imagine they have diſcover'd ſeveral grievous Blots and Blemiſhes, where they ought to have been admiring ſo many Beauties; plume themſelves on their ſingular Penetration, and immediately conclude, that they have overthrown the whole Fabric of Chriſtianity. On this Occaſion I ſhall take the Liberty of offering a few general Hints to the Admirers of a late Writer of this Rank, the celebrated Mr. *Chubb*: who, notwithſtanding a tolerably clear Head, and ſtrong natural Parts; yet by ever aiming at Things far beyond his reach, by attempting a Variety of Subjects, for which his narrow Circumſtances and ſmall Compaſs of Reading and Knowledge had in a great meaſure diſqualify'd him; from a fallacious kind of Philoſophy, (with which he ſet out, and by which one of his Education might very eaſily be miſled,) he fell by degrees to ſuch Confuſion in Divinity, to ſuch low Quibbling on ſome obſcure paſſages in our Tranſlation of the Bible, and was reduced to ſuch wretched Cavils as to ſeveral hiſtorical Facts and Circumſtances, wherein a ſmall Skill either in the Languages or

Sciences

power. But what we are now conſidering in the Life of *Chriſt*, is its more ordinary courſe,

Sciences might have ſet him right, or a ſmall Share of real Modeſty would have ſupply'd the Want of them, by putting him upon conſulting thoſe who could have given him proper Aſſiſtance; that he ſeems to have fallen at laſt into an almoſt univerſal Scepticiſm, and quitting that former ſerious and ſedate Sobriety, which gave him Credit, contents himſelf with carrying on a mere Farce for ſome time, acts the part of a ſolemn, grave Buffoon, ſneers at all Things he does not underſtand, and after all his fair Profeſſions, and the *Caveat* he has enter'd againſt ſuch a Charge, muſt unavoidably be ſet down in the *Seat of the Scorner*. Hard then muſt be the Lot of all thoſe who think themſelves obliged to vindicate the Goſpel againſt ſuch a Writer! if they are not only to make out Things plain before his Face, but muſt alſo find him Eyes to ſee, and an Heart to apply honeſtly what he does ſee:— who is ever crying out for Conviction, yet never ſeems to know when he ought to be convinc'd:— is juſt able to ſtart Difficulties, and perplex himſelf, but neither can judge of the Anſwers to them, nor will believe ſuch as are capable of judging:— If ſuch People will diſpute every Day *de omni ſcibili*;— if they will inſtantly determine every Point of ancient Hiſtory, who neither are acquainted with the Language, Cuſtoms, Circumſtances, or Situation of Things, Times, and Perſons, nor will be taught by ſuch as are;— who form Objections againſt Sacred Writ, which hold equally againſt every other Writing in the World, and yet have not been able to aſſign any better Method of Conveyance than by Writing;— who deny the ſame equitable Allowance to theſe, that they do and muſt make to all other ancient writings;— will adhere cloſely to the *literal* ſenſe,

and common tenor; which we find chiefly converſant in *ſocial Duties*, as theſe come into

whenever it can be ſkrew'd up to their purpoſe, though they know, no hiſtorical Books in the world will bear it; — and when juſt anſwers, and the moſt probable ſolutions have been often given with candour, and may be ſeen in almoſt every Comment, are above looking into any of them, but content themſelves with repeating the ſame cavils over and over again, making their Number ſtand for Weight, and that very repetition ſerve for a proof that they have had no reaſonable reply: — what is this but a prejudice againſt Revelation, greater and much more unfair than that which they would fix upon the generality of its Vindicators? who inſtead of having recourſe to violence in ſupport of whatever *ſupports* them, as the ſame Author has ſo oft inſinuated, are always *ready to give an anſwer to every one that aſketh them a reaſon of the Hope that is in them*, and who are at leaſt equally concern'd, with the infidels, to ſee that this Hope be well grounded; ſince by their avow'd principles they place it beyond this life, whatever others do; and might ſupport themſelves here under any other Inſtitution, founded upon different principles, were that eſtabliſh'd; toward which they might alſo exert their utmoſt Endeavours with the ſame, and perhaps greater worldly advantage (were they determin'd by ſuch motives) than they now have to act upon the oppoſite ſcheme: For their continual labours, therefore, to reduce this to the original Standard, and adhere to that as nearly as poſſible, wherein many of them are inclined to run the greateſt temporal hazards; for their reforming it at firſt from Popery, which offer'd, and ſtill offers, the greateſt Baits of eaſe and opulence, and pomp and power, and their conſtant endeavours to remove the

ſame

uſe moſt frequently, and are of the greateſt and moſt general Benefit to mankind; and ſetting us a pattern of performing theſe, which was the moſt inviting to us, and moſt imitable by us; and the leaſt capable of ever being miſtaken, or perverted: a Pattern, not only of perfect innocence, but uſefulneſs in every circumſtance, and ſituation; of joining ſometimes in ſuch relaxations both of mind and body, as would tend to the comfort and ſupport of each; ſuch prudent, moderate enjoyment of the good things of this world, as might convert them both to the preſent and the future benefit of all who partook of them; of undergoing all the toils and difficulties, labours and diſtreſſes, to which we are ſubject; of bearing all the evils and afflictions, the Croſſes and ca-

ſame corruptions ſtill farther from them; this, one would think, could be accounted for no otherwiſe than from a ſtrong conviction of its internal excellence and Truth, and their own indiſpenſable duty to promote and propagate it as it is in itſelf, for the common good: at leaſt 'tis ſtrange, if none of them can be found equally wiſe and ſincere in this point, as their adverſaries are in oppoſition to it. The tree is known by its fruit: Let then the general Character of each, and their apparent worth and uſefulneſs in other reſpects, and not the clamours of ſuch very incompetent judges, as the above-mention'd writer, be admitted to determine this point.

lamities

lamities of Life, with ſo much patience, conſtancy and perſeverance, as would prevent our ſinking under them; and at length make us *more than conquerors* over them. A Pattern of particular affection and eſteem for friends; of general kindneſs, and good will toward enemies; of gratitude and love for all good offices; of meekneſs and a moſt forgiving temper under any ill uſage; of ſtrict obedience to ſuperiors, either in Church or State, ſo far as is conſiſtent with our duty to the ſupreme Being;[1] mildneſs and condeſcenſion to inferi-

[1] In proof of this, beſide the inſtance given in Note *f*, of his moſt ſcrupulous exactneſs to avoid the leaſt appearance of intruding on another's office; we may obſerve, that when he is oblig'd to expoſe the great hypocriſy and villainy of the *Jewiſh* Doctors, who were the moſt injurious adverſaries of his cauſe, he carefully diſtinguiſhes between their authority or commiſſion, and the exerciſe thereof; between their public teaching, and their practice. *Matt.* 23. *Admoniſhing the people* [as it is in the contents of that chapter in our Bibles] *to follow the good doctrine, not the evil examples, of the Scribes and Phariſees. The Scribes and the Phariſees ſit in Moſes's Seat; all therefore whatſoever they bid you obſerve, that obſerve and do; but do not ye after their works; for they ſay, and do not.* v. 2,3. 'The *Jewiſh* Doctors and Phariſees, tho' they be hypo-'crites, and covetous, and vain-glorious men, yet ſince 'they ſucceed *Moſes* and the Prophets, in being teachers 'and expounders of the Law of God, ye ought to hearken 'and attend to their teaching. What therefore they teach

'you

ors, in whatſoever reſpect, or whatſoever degree; of juſtice, fidelity, benevolence and charity to all. In ſhort, his whole Life was a lec-

'you *out of the Law of God, and agreeable to it*, that hear 'ye and obey: but imitate not their examples; becauſe 'their lives are diſagreeable and contrary to their doc-'trine.' *Clarke*'s Paraphr. Hoc dicit Chriſtus, ne putaretur aut adverſarius eſſe *Moſis*, aut eorum odio, aut cupiditate principatûs ipſos in ſequentibus reprehendere. Et quoniam defectus in perſonis, non profeſſione, erat, providet, ut, perſonarum ratione poſthabitâ, muneri, miniſterio, et profeſſioni ipſi, ſua dignitas integra maneat. L. *Brugenſ.* in loc. Comp. *Wolzogen.* 16.

So far is our Saviour's hiſtory from conſiſting of that angry oppoſition to his ſuperiors, as ſuch; or from diſcovering that envious, aſpiring, factious diſpoſition, which ſome perſons have had either the weakneſs or the wickedneſs to ſuggeſt. To theſe I would recommend the following teſtimony of one, who ſeems to have been at that time a more equitable unbeliever. — 'In *Chriſt* we have 'an example of a quiet and peaceable ſpirit, of a becom-'ing modeſty and ſobriety, juſt and honeſt, upright and 'ſincere, and above all of a moſt gracious and benevolent 'temper and behaviour. One who did no wrong, no in-'jury to any man, in whoſe mouth was no guile, who 'went about doing good, not only by his preaching and 'miniſtry, but alſo in curing all manner of diſeaſes among 'the people. His Life was a beautiful picture of human 'nature when in its native purity and ſimplicity; and 'ſhew'd at once what excellent creatures men would be, 'when under the influence and power of that Goſpel he preached unto them. *Chubb*, True Goſp. of *J. Chriſt.* S. 8. p. 55, 56.

ture

ture of true practical philoſophy, and each part of it pointed out ſome virtue proper for our imitation. *

Which brings me, in the next place, to his *Manner of teaching:* and this was likewiſe the moſt eaſy and natural that could be imagin'd. He generally draws his doctrine from the preſent occaſion, and the objects that ſurround him; from the moſt common occurrencies, and occupations; from the ſeaſons of the year; the *Jewiſh* ſolemnities; from ſome extraordinary accidents, remarkable places, or tranſactions; and the like.

Thus upon curing a blind Man, he admoniſhes the *Phariſees* of their ſpiritual Blindneſs, and inexcuſable Obſtinacy in refuſing to be cured. [a] On little Children being brought to him, he recommends the innocence, and the Humility of that State, as very proper Qualities for all thoſe who would be Members of his Church; and under the ſame figure intimates the Privileges that belong to all ſuch. [b] Beholding the Flowers of the Field, and Fowls of the Air, he teaches his Diſciples to frame right and

* See ſome of the principal of theſe Virtues ſpecified in Bp. *Fowler*'s *Deſign of Chriſtianity*. c. 5.

[a] *Joh.* 9. 39.

[b] *Mark* 10. 14, 15. *Matt.* 18. 4, 5, 6, 10.

worthy

worthy Notions of that Providence which ſupports them, and therefore will ſupport Beings of a rank ſo much ſuperior to them. [c] Obſerving the Fruits of the Earth, he inſtructs them to judge of Men by their Fruits, and not to be themſelves unfruitful under all the Means of Grace. [d] Taking notice of their Behaviour at a Feaſt, he firſt gives general Advice therein to both the Maſter [dd] and his Gueſts, and

[c] *Matt.* 6. 26, 28. *Luke* 12. 24, *&c.*

[d] *Matt.* 7. 16. *Luke* 6. 43, &c.

[dd] The not attending to our Saviour's manner of inſtructing *occaſionally*, and by a ſpecial inſtance then occurring, [tho' he was far from inſiſting on that very particular inſtance, farther ſtill from confining his Doctrine to it;] inſtead of laying down immediately the *general Rule*, as we ſhould probably do, or enjoyning the *Principle*, which either would extend to that and the like inſtances, or produce an *Equivalent* as the Caſe required; this has given room for a great deal of very indecent drollery on *Luk.* 14. 12, 13. from Mr. *Chubb* [Poſth. Works, p. 25, *&c.*] as if, inſtead of directing our *Beneficence* in general to ſuch in the firſt place as wanted it moſt, which is all that can fairly be implied, and which is ſurely unexceptionable; Chriſt had confined his Direction to that one particular Mode of Hoſpitality, and required all his Diſciples who were of ability to invite the *Poor*, *Lame*, *Blind*, &c. to their Tables, to entertain ſuch there, and ſuch only: which would, as Mr. *Chubb* ſays in the ſame ſtrain, p. 27. be *ſomething extraordinary*. Dominus venit non tantum ut ederet, ſed etiam ut aliquid boni doceret, occa-

from thence brings them to the conſideration of a better Entertainment, to which they were

occaſione ſumpta ex rebus quæ occurrebant. — Non prohibet ſimpliciter vocare divites ad cœnam, vel convivium, hoc enim et humanitas ſæpe poſtulat et res ipſa. — Sed agit hic de conviviis voluntariis, quæ non alia de cauſa inſtituuntur quam animo benefaciendi. Deinde non prohibet id tanquam peccatum, ſed tanquam rem inutilem et nullius momenti coram Deo, incitans ad rem quæ utilis valde et apud Deum eximia eſt. Nec præcipit Chriſtus omnino ut convivia faciant; ſed ſi velint facere, oſtendit qualia debent facere, et quos invitare. Tantundem valet etſi non inſtruas ex profeſſo convivium, ſi mittas pauperi cibos in domum ejus, ſi des ei pecuniam qua ſibi emere poſſit neceſſaria. *Crell.* Op. T. 2. p. 55. Comp. *Cleric. Whitby. Grot.* in loc. I ſhall only add two or three parallel paſſages, which may perhaps help to procure this a more favourable Interpretation, at leaſt will ſhew the Precept to be not ſo very *peculiarly Chriſtian*, as this ſame Gentleman is pleas'd to repreſent, in order to burleſque and expoſe it. (ib. p. 26, &c.) And in truth, with juſt as much Probability as he thinks *Waſhing the Feet is one of the principal poſitive Inſtitutions* that belong to Chriſtianity. ib. p. 277. *Cic.* Off. 1. 15. — Hoc maxime officii eſt, ut quiſque maxime opis indigeat, ita ei potiſſimum opitulari; quod contra fit a pleriſque: a quo enim plurimum ſperant, etiamſi ille his non eget, tamen ei potiſſimum inſerviunt. *Plin.* Ep. 9. 30. Volo eum qui ſit vere liberalis tribuere patriæ, propinquis, affinibus, amicis; ſed amicis dico pauperibus: non ut iſti, qui iis potiſſimum donant, qui donare maxime poſſunt. Hos ego viſcatis hamatiſque muneribus, non ſua promere puto, ſed aliena corripere. — Ανελευθερως πραττειν τα περι τυς ξενυς τυς πενητας,

all invited, but of which few among them would render themſelves worthy.[e] From Meat and Drink, he leads them to the eating of his Body and drinking his Blood in a ſpiritual ſenſe; the being nouriſh'd with his Doctrine, and partaking of his Kingdom.[f] From outward *Waſhing*, to the Purifying of the Heart, and cleanſing the Affections.[ff] From taſting of the Fruit of the Vine after the Paſchal Supper, to the Celebration of an eternal Feſtival of Freedom, Reſt and Happineſs in another World.[fff] From

πενητας, μονους τους πλουσιους ὑποδεχεσθαι ξενιοις, καὶ δωροις, παρ' ων δηλον οτι καὶ προσεδοκων των ισων εντυχειν. *Dion.* Pruſæenſ. Or. 7.

[e] *Luke* 14. 7, 16, &c.

[f] *Joh.* 6. 31, 53, &c. See a like Alluſion on the mention of *Meat*. *Joh.* 4. 32.

[ff] *Joh.* 13. 8.

[fff] *Matt.* 26. 29. *Luke* 22. 17, 18. Ex occaſione vini conſpicui et proprie dicti Chriſtus docet Diſcipulos ſe non amplius celebraturum cum iis ullam liberationem, niſi poſtremam illam quâ ex omnibus malis reſurrectione liberabuntur. Deſcribit cœleſtem illam hilaritatem *potione Vini*, non tantum quia hujus rei incidit mentio, paullo poſtquam Vinum bibiſſet; ſed quia *bibere Vinum* in Scripturâ perinde eſt ac convivari [v. *Eſaiæ* c. 22. 13. 24. 9.] felicitas vero ſub imagine convivii deſcribitur, ut c. 8. 11. Addit *Vinum* hoc fore *novum*, quia Apoſtoli antea nunquam hanc felicitatem guſtaverint. Sæpe Chriſtus a rebus corporeis ad ſpirituales tranſiens eas iiſdem vocibus exprimit. *Cleric.* in *Matt.* 26. 29.

the

the *Salt*, he takes occaſion to acquaint them with the nature of their Office, which was to ſeaſon the Minds of Men, and keep them from the Contagion of this World, as well as give them a true Taſte and Reliſh for the Enjoyments of that Kingdom; and at the ſame time reminds them of the abſolute Neceſſity for their duly executing this their Office; otherwiſe, inſtead of being the beſt, the pureſt and moſt uſeful, they would become the moſt worthleſs, and incurable, and contemptible among Mankind.[g] Thoſe that were Fiſhers he teaches how to catch Men:[h] and ſhews them how far this would reſemble their former employment, in taking of all kinds, both bad and good; which were at firſt inſeparable, but would at length be carefully diſtinguiſh'd from each other.[i] Seeing the Money-changers, he exhorts his Diſciples to lay out their ſeveral talents to the beſt advantage.[k] Being among the Sheepfolds, he proves himſelf to be the true Shepherd of Souls, deſcribing the particulars

[g] *Mark* 9. 50. v. *Cleric. Luke* 14. 34. v. *Whitby* in loc.

[h] *Luke* 5. 10. *Mark* 1. 17.

[i] *Matt.* 13. 47.

[k] *Matt.* 25. 27. *Luke* 19. 23, 45.

in

in which his Character exactly anſwer'd that of a good Shepherd.[l] Among Vines, he diſcourſes on the ſpiritual Huſbandman and Vine-dreſſer, and draws a parallel between his Vineyard and the natural one.[m] Upon the Appearance of Summer in the Trees before him, he points out as evident Signs of his approaching Kingdom.[n] At the Seaſon of Fruits, he puts the *Jews* in mind that the Time was come when ſome would be expected from them, in return for all the Labour that had been beſtowed upon them; and intimates the Judgement, that would ſhortly overtake all ſuch among them as were found unprofitable.[o] When the Harveſt comes on, he reminds them of the ſpiritual Harveſt, or the gathering of his Church among Men, admoniſhes them to labour diligently in that Work, and add their Prayers to Heaven for Succeſs.[p] From Ser-

[l] *Joh.* 10. 1. To which we may add, that the Title of *Shepherd*, often uſed in Scripture, was by the *Jews* applied peculiarly to the *Meſſiah*. v. *Allix*, Judgement of the Jew. Ch. p. 304. et *Cleric.* in *Joh.* 10. 25.

[m] *Matt.* 26. 30. *Joh.* 15. 1.

[n] *Luke* 21. 29. *Matt.* 24. 32.

[o] *Matt.* 21. 33. *Luke* 13. 6.

[p] *Matt.* 9. 38. *Luke* 10. 2. *Joh.* 4. 35. On voit qu'en toutes rencountres, il prend occaſion de ce qui ſe préſente à ſes yeux, pour detâcher l'éſprit de la terre, et pour l'élever aux veritez céleſtes et ſalutaires. Si la campagne lui

vants being made free on the ſabbatical Year, he takes Occaſion to proclaim a greater and more noble Freedom from the Slavery of Sin, and Bondage of Corruption.[q] And from the *Jewiſh* Ceremony of fetching Water on the laſt Day of the Feaſt of Tabernacles, in Commemoration of the Miracle wrought for their Fathers in the thirſty Wilderneſs; he introduces an Offer of that true *living Water*, which ſhould be unto them a Well ſpringing up unto everlaſting Life; the Goſpel of immortal Happineſs and Salvation, and the plentiful Effuſion of the Holy Spirit, which they that believed on him were to receive.[r] Upon hearing of ſome that were kill'd by the Fall of a Tower, and others put to death by the *Roman* Governour in the midſt of their Sacrifices, he guards them againſt all Miſconſtruction and raſh Cen-

préſente ſes champs couverts d'une belle moiſſon, il dit à ſes Diſciples, *la moiſſon eſt grande, mais il y a peu d'ouvriers; priez donc le Seigneur de la moiſſon qu'il envoye des ouvriers dans ſa moiſſon*; aiant égard à la multitude du people qui le ſuivoit, dont il fut émû de compaſſion, parce qu'ils êtoient comme *de brébis qui n'ont point de paſteur*. *Jaquelot* de la Vérité, *&c.* p. 311.

[q] *Joh.* 8. 32.

[r] *Joh.* 7. 37, *&c.* Comp. *Joh.* 4. 10. where the ſame Image is made uſe of on the like Occaſion. Vid. *Cleric.* ib. et in ver. 14.

ſure

ſure in ſuch Caſes; exhorts them all to take Warning by theſe Puniſhments, and foretells the general Deſtruction of ſuch as would not be perſwaded to it; and which ſhould be the more diſtinguiſhable, as coming attended with the very ſame Circumſtances.[s] From the conſpicuous Eminence of a City ſtanding on a Mountain, he turns his Diſcourſe to the no leſs remarkable Situation of his own Diſciples.[t] From the Temple before him, he points * to that of his Body, which was moſt properly ſo call'd from the Divinity reſiding in him.[u] From *Herod*'s unadviſedly leading his Army out to meet the King of *Arabia*, who came againſt him with ſuperior Forces, and defeated him †; a Leſſon is laid down to all who enter'd on the Chriſtian Warfare, that they ſhould firſt well weigh, and carefully compute the Difficulties that attended it, before they were engaged in a Matter of ſuch Conſequence.[w] From the Robberies which were more particu-

[s] *Luke* 13. 1. v. *Whitby* in loc.

[t] *Matt.* 5. 14. v. *Maundrell.* p. 115.

* In the like manner I conceive him laying his Hand on *Peter*, when he ſpake theſe Words, *Upon this Rock*, &c. *Matt.* 16. 18.

[u] *Joh.* 2. 19.

† *Joſeph.* Ant. Jud. L. 19: c. 7.

[w] *Luke* 14. 31.

larly frequent in that Age ‡, he forms a beautiful Story of a certain Traveller, who fell among Thieves, was ſtripp'd, and wounded, and could find Relief from none of his own Country or Perſwaſion; but met with it in one of thoſe from whom he had leaſt Reaſon to expect any, as being ſo much uſed to deſpiſe and hate that People, and their way of Worſhip ‖. From whence he forces his Opponent to approve this amiable Inſtance of Humanity, even in the odious Character of a *Samaritan*; and thereby ſhews him inconteſtably, that the like good Office would no leſs become a *Jew* in the like Circumſtances ww. And from what often happen'd about that time, namely, that thoſe who obtain'd the Kingdom of *Judea* went to *Rome* to be confirmed in it, and on their Return call'd ſuch to account as had been wanting in their Duty, and took ample Vengeance on thoſe who rebell'd againſt them, [which

‡ *Joſeph.* Ant. Jud. L. 20. c. 6. Id. B. J. c. 5. et in Vit. p. 2, 3.

‖ That this notorious Enmity between the *Jews* and *Samaritans* was then carried to the greateſt height, at leaſt by the former, *Joh.* 4. 9. (for which our Saviour taxes them very artfully on ſome occaſions, *Luke* 17. 16.) appears where ever Mention is made of the latter. v. *Joh.* 8. 48.

ww *Luke* 10. 30, *&c.* Vid. *Cleric.* ib. v. 36.

was

was the Caſe particularly under *Archelaus* *;] he gives his Followers to underſtand, that after he had aſcended into Heaven, and taken full Poſſeſſion of his ſpiritual Kingdom over Mankind, he would come again in Power and great Glory, and not only puniſh that rebellious Nation of the *Jews*, with exemplary Judgements; but at length condemn all thoſe who wilfully oppoſed his Goſpel, as well as thoſe who continued to neglect and diſregard it [x].

Many more Inſtances might be given, where *Chriſt* has form'd his Arguments and Exhortations on ſuch Things as offer'd themſelves to him; applying each moſt aptly to his preſent Purpoſe; and where this does not ſo immediately appear, we have reaſon to believe it chiefly owing to the Omiſſion of ſome Circumſtances in the Hiſtory; as is obſerv'd by a very eminent Writer [y]. By this means he improved

* *Joſeph.* Ant. Jud. L. 18. c. 14. 15.

[x] *Luke* 19. 12. v. *Cleric.* et *Clarke* in loc.

[y] See *Newton* on *Daniel*, p. 148. Not. *a.* where many of theſe Inſtances of our Saviour's ſpeaking *pro re natâ* are produced. Comp. *Lightfoot*, Op. Lat. Vol. 1. p. 324. in *Luk.* 3. 11. p. 416. *Matt.* 10. 29. *Luk.* 12. 6. p. 417. *Matt.* 10. 9, 10. p. 468. *Joh.* 4. 35. p. 619. V. 2. p. 45. *Matt.* 21. 21. p. 288. *Matt.* 5. 24. *Schoetgenii* Hor. Heb. p. 143. in *Matt.* 16. 18. et *Joh.* 6. 50. *Cleric.* in *Matt.* 3. 10. But we are preſented with the beſt collection of

every thing into an uſeful Moral; made every Object and Event ſerve for a conſtant Monitor

ſuch Inſtances, together with the proper *Uſes* to be made of them, by a very learned and ingenious Writer, whom I ſhall take the Liberty of citing in the Margin*; and proceed to obſerve from hence how neceſſary a careful Attention to the particular Occaſion, Time, and Place, as well as ſituation, poſture, geſture, *&c.* in which our Saviour ſpake, muſt be, in order fully to comprehend the Pertinence, the Force and Beauty of his Diſcourſes: which ſhould remind us of the Allowances that ought in Juſtice to be made for the Uncouthneſs of ſome Things in them at this Day, from our unavoidable Ignorance of many minute

* 'In the Spring our Saviour went into the Fields, and ſat 'down on a Mountain, and made that Diſcourſe which is re- 'corded in St. *Matthew*, and which is full of Obſervations 'ariſing from the Things which offer'd themſelves to his Sight. 'For when he exhorted his Diſciples to truſt in God, he bad 'them *behold* the Fowls of the Air, which were then flying 'about them, and were fed by Divine Providence, tho' they 'did not *ſow*, nor *reap*, nor *gather into Barns*: he bade them 'take Notice of the Lilies of the Field, which were then blown, 'and were ſo beautifully clothed by the ſame Power, and yet 'toiled not like the Huſbandmen, who were then at work. 'Being in a Place whence they had a wide Proſpect of a cul- 'tivated Land, he bade them obſerve how God cauſed the Sun 'to ſhine, and the Rain to deſcend upon the Fields and Gar- 'dens, even of the Wicked and Ungrateful: And he continued 'to convey his Doctrine to them under rural Images; ſpeak- 'ing of good Trees, and corrupt Trees; of knowing Men by 'their Fruits; of Wolves in Sheeps Clothing; of Grapes not 'growing upon thorns, nor Figs on Thiſtles; of the Folly of 'caſting pretious Things to Dogs and Swine; of good 'Meaſure

and Remembrancer of his Inſtructions; which by theſe Means muſt be more eaſily retain'd

minute Circumſtances; and make us ſenſible of the value of thoſe Authors, who throw ſo much Light on ſeveral Paſſages of Scripture, by attempting to ſupply them. It may be farther obſerv'd, that *Chriſt* is no leſs eaſy and intelligible to his Auditors in his more *ſet Diſcourſes*, by alluding in as familiar a way to all their Cuſtoms, Proverbs, Maxims, *&c.* ſpeaking always preciſely in the Character of a *Jew*, and in exact Conformity to what ſuch underſtood beſt, and had been muſt uſed to. Thus he takes the very Form of his firſt Sermon on the Mount from

'Meaſure preſs'd down, and ſhaken together, and running over. 'Speaking at the ſame Time to People, many of whom 'were Fiſhermen, and lived much upon Fiſh, he ſays, *What 'Man of you will give his Son a Serpent if he aſk a Fiſh.* There-'fore when he ſaid, in the ſame Diſcourſe, to his Diſciples, *Ye 'are the Light of the World; a City that is ſet on a Hill cannot 'be hid*; it is probable, that he pointed to a City within their 'View, ſituated upon the Brow of a Hill. And when he called 'them *the Salt of the Earth*, he alluded perhaps to the Huſ-'bandmen who were manuring the Ground: and when he 'compared every Perſon who obſerved his Precepts to a Man 'who built a Houſe upon a Rock, which ſtood firm; and 'every one who ſlighted his Words, to a Man who built a 'Houſe upon the Sand, which was thrown down by the Winds 'and Floods: when he uſed this Compariſon, 'tis not impro-'bable, that he had before his Eyes Houſes ſtanding upon high 'Ground, and Houſes in the Valley in a ruinous Condition, 'which had been deſtroy'd by Inundations. [Mr. *Jortin*'s Diſ-'courſes, p. 201. 203. 1ſt Ed.] Going from *Bethany* to *Jeru-'ſalem*, with his Diſciples, as they paſſed over a Mountain, he 'ſaid, *If ye ſhall ſay to this Mountain, Be thou removed, and be 'thou caſt into the Sea, it ſhall be done. Matt.* 21. 21. When

than they could be by a long train of abſtract Reaſoning, or under any artificial Arrangement of a number of Particulars laid down together. Again, It is obſervable, that he deliver'd many

from thoſe *Bleſſings* and *Curſes* on two Mountains, the Publiſhing whereof was enjoined to the *Iſraelites* upon their Entrance into the holy Land, (*Deut.* 27. 28. *Joſh.* 8. *Matt.* 5. *Luke* 6. 24.) the manner of which Solemnity has been deſcribed at large by ſome of their Writers. v. *Lightfoot*, Op. T. 2. p. 20. *Ad explicationem hujus Divinæ Concionis multiplex et accurata Judaicarum Antiquitatum cognitio requiritur. Chriſtus enim in unaquaque fere linea linguam, dogmata, mores, traditiones, et ſententiam Judæorum reſpicit.* Id. ib. p. 21.

' he ſays, *Luke* 22. 25. *The Kings of the Gentiles exerciſe Lord-*
' *ſhip over them, and they that exerciſe Authority upon them are*
' *called Benefactors*, he alludes to the Vanity of ſome wicked
' Princes in thoſe Times, who deſerved the Title of Robbers
' much better than of Benefactors. [v. *Cleric.* in loc.] When
' the Woman of *Samaria*, *Joh.* 4. wondered that he ſhould aſk
' Water of her, he took Occaſion to repreſent his Doctrine
' under the Image of *living Water*, or Water which flows from
' a Spring. When he was by the Sea-Shore, *Matt.* 13. he ſpake
' three Parables to the People concerning a Sower, becauſe it
' was then probably Seed-time, as others have obſerved. At the
' Time of the Paſſover, alluding to it, he ſays, *Joh.* 5. 24. *He*
' *that heareth my Word, μεταβεβηκεν, is paſſed from Death unto*
' *Life.* [*Grot.*] When he ſpake of the Fig-Tree, which had
' born no Fruit for three Years, and was to be cut down if it
' produced none the next Year; he alluded perhaps to the
' Time that he had ſpent in preaching to the *Jews*, as well
' as to their Obſtinacy, and to the Puniſhment which would
' follow it. *Luke* 13. Id. ib. in Not. p. 218. 2d Ed.

Things

Things by way of *Story* or *Parable*; a moſt engaging, and a moſt effectual Method of Inſtruction, gradually informing thoſe who in reality were diſpoſed for Information, and not too violently diſguſting thoſe who were not[z]. This way of teaching is of all others moſt apt to raiſe and to keep up the Attention, and ſet each faculty of the Mind on work: it gives the eaſieſt Admiſſion into both Head and Heart; it ſtrikes the deepeſt, ſticks the longeſt; gives moſt Delight, by leaving ſomething for the Hearers themſelves to diſcover; and diſobliges leaſt, by putting them upon making their own Application. On theſe Accounts it has been admired in all Ages and Nations from the Beginning of the World; and was particularly celebrated in the Eaſt[aa]. This, among many o-

[z] See *Le Clerc*'s Harmony, p. 183. The ſame Thing is elegantly deſcribed, and well apply'd, by the Author of *Dialogues concerning Education*, p. 363, &c. The like may be obſerv'd of the many *figurative* Expreſſions which our Saviour uſes upon ſome Occaſions. See *Clagett* upon *Joh.* 4. On the ſame Account it was, in all Probability, that he ſo generally choſe to expreſs himſelf in the very Words of ſome ancient Prophet.

[aa] *Jerom* on *Matt.* 14. *Whitby* on *Matt.* 13. 10. *Nichols* Conf. V. 1. 'It was the Cuſtom of the wiſe Men among 'the Ancients, to cloath their Inſtructions in apt Stories 'and ſuitable Compariſons: Such is the Parable of *Jo-* '*tham*, and that very apt one of *Nathan* to *David*: this

'they

ther excellent Uſes to which Chriſt apply'd it in a Manner the moſt delicate and maſterly,

'they did at once to pleaſe, and to inſtruct, to excite 'Mens Attention by gratifying their Curioſity, and to 'quicken their Memory by entertaining their Fancy. 'Our Saviour took this Method to recommend his weigh-'ty Inſtructions, and make them ſink deeper into the 'Minds of his Auditors. The ſame Method was likewiſe 'very proper for another purpoſe, *viz.* to deliver the Myſ-'teries of the Goſpel with ſome degree of Obſcurity and 'Reſerve; which he did both to excite Mens Induſtry in 'ſearching further into the deep Things of God, and 'withal to puniſh the Sloth and Negligence of thoſe who 'grudge taking any Pains to learn God's Will and their 'own Duty. This Reaſon, you may find, our Saviour 'himſelf aſſigns, why he ſpake to the Multitude in Pa-'rables, *Matt.* 13. 10, *&c.* Theſe were the Reaſons why 'our Saviour choſe to convey his Inſtructions in Parables. 'And we may obſerve in general concerning them, 'Firſt, that they have a pleaſing *Variety*, ſuited to Mens 'different Apprehenſions and Capacities; and in the next 'place, that there is an extraordinary *Decency*, and if I 'may ſo expreſs it, a *Genteelneſs*, which runs thro' them 'all. Our Saviour puts the Caſe in all his Parables on 'the charitable ſide, and makes the moſt favourable Re-'preſentation of Things which the Matter will bear. In 'the Parable of the *ten Virgins*, he ſuppoſes the Number 'of the wiſe to be equal to that of the fooliſh. [ſee *Til-'lotſon*, S. 31.] In the Parable of the *loſt Sheep*, he ſuppo-'ſes but one of a hundred to go aſtray; and yet the *good 'Shepherd* is content to leave all the reſt, and go in queſt 'after the ſingle Straggler. In the third place, there is an 'exact *Decorum* obſerv'd in all Chriſt's Parables, and

'every

was peculiarly fitted to inſinuate ſuch Points, as more immediately oppos'd the Prejudices, or the Inclinations of all thoſe to whom Chriſt preached; and which, tho' neceſſary for them to be appriſed of, ſo far as might help afterwards to reconcile their Thoughts to theſe Things, when they were able to recollect that they had been intended, and foretold from the Beginning; yet were not at that Time to be laid down in a more open, direct Manner: ſuch as related chiefly to the external Circumſtances of his Perſon and Doctrine, and the Effects thereof upon both *Jew* and *Gentile* *. As to the fun-

'every thing that is ſpoken is fitted to the Character of the 'Perſon who ſpeaks it: a Beauty, which the Critics look 'upon as the greateſt Ornament of a Poem; and which 'of itſelf is ſufficient to make it heard or read with De-'light and Admiration: And therefore, I hope, it may 'recommend our Saviour's Parables to the nice and deli-'cate Taſte of our modern Wits; who are apt to think 'every Thing in Scripture ſo mean and flat, as not to be 'worth their reading.' *Lowth*'s Directions, p. 185, *&c.* Les Paraboles que *Jeſus Chriſt* emploie, excellent ſur toutes les autres en ce qu'elles ſont ſi naturelles et ſi vraiſemblables, qu'elles ont l'air de Veritez plûtôt que de Fictions. On n'y voit point les Animaux, ni les Plantes former de Converſations enſemble. On n'y trouve rien d'impoſſible, ni de ridicule, ni de monſtrueux, comme dans le *Talmud*, ou dans *l'Alcoran*. Tout y eſt ſimple et tiré d'après Nature, &c. *Jaquelot* ib. p. 318.

* Vid. *Jaquelot*, p. 319, *&c.*

dament-

damental Parts of his Religion, and his Manner of declaring them; both theſe were eaſy and obvious, ſuch as the weakeſt and moſt ignorant [unleſs affectedly ſo] could not miſtake; and propoſed in that plain popular way which they were moſt accuſtomed to, and in which they would be moſt like to apprehend him †: And it is worth remarking, that where ever his Words ſeem capable of different Senſes, we may with Certainty conclude that to be the true one, which lay moſt level to the Comprehenſion of his Auditors; allowing for thoſe figurative Expreſſions, which were ſo very fre-

† *Chriſtus* cum vulgo ſemper et ubique loquitur. *Lightfoot.* Op. Lat. V. 2. p. 326. 510. 'What you ſay about 'Critics and critical Interpretations, particularly of the 'Scriptures, is not only in my Opinion true, but of great 'Uſe to be obſerved in reading learned Commentators; 'who not ſeldom make it their Buſineſs to ſhew in what 'Senſe a Word has been uſed by other Authors; whereas 'the proper Buſineſs of a Commentator is to ſhew, in what 'Senſe it was uſed by the Author in that Place; which 'in the Scripture we have Reaſon to conclude, was moſt 'commonly in the *ordinary vulgar Senſe of the Word or* '*Phraſe known in that Time*; becauſe the Books were writ-'ten, as you rightly obſerve, and adapted to the *People.* 'If Critics had obſerved this, we ſhould have in their 'Writings leſs Oſtentation, and more Truth; and a great 'deal of Darkneſs now ſpread on the Scriptures had been 'avoided.' *Locke*'s Letter to *Bold.* 1699. *Muſeum* N°. 20.

quent

quent and familiar with them; and which therefore are no Exceptions to this general Rule, this neceſſary *Canon of Interpretation*, which of all others, I think, wants moſt to be recommended *. The Bulk of his Doctrine

* The not being willing to attend, or to make a due Allowance for this, has occaſion'd Mr. *Chubb*'s groſs Miſrepreſentation of ſome of our Saviour's Precepts, in his Piece ſtil'd *Remarks on Scripture.* [Poſth. Works, P^t. 1.] As an adhering ſtrictly to the *literal* Senſe is very abſurd in the Interpretation of a *popular Phraſe*, in all Parts of the World, and the moſt common Ground of Miſapprehenſion; ſo of all Things is it the moſt unreaſonable in one that pretends to give us the true Senſe of *Eaſtern* Writings, which are ſo well known to abound in general, brief Maxims, parabolic or proverbial Expreſſions, and extremely popular Forms of Speech; [v. Aſſize Serm. at *Carliſle*, on *Matt.* 5. 40.] where ſuch a low, dry, minute, and ſeemingly accurate Way of reaſoning and diſcourſing; ſuch a dull, tedious Detail of Circumſtances and reſtraining Clauſes, as is in uſe with us, would have been little reliſh'd or regarded; and which, were it to the Purpoſe, might be eaſily juſtified in Point of Certainty and Perſpicuity; ſince to one who is tolerably acquainted with their Stile and Language, the main Drift lies commonly very obvious under all theſe ſtrong and ſignificant, however highly figurative and bold Expreſſions. Nor is there any great Difficulty in ſupplying all the proper Qualifications, which of courſe ariſe in every Subject, and will have an Allowance made for them, ſo long as either common Senſe or common Equity and Candour is admitted; ſince in ſuch Writings there is never any particular *Streſs* placed in *Words*, to the Prejudice or Excluſion of it, as

is

was of a practical Nature, always pertinent to the Caſe in hand, and of an immediate and apparent Tendency to the moſt beneficial Purpoſes; and he is ſo far from ſeeking Reputation by an artful and elaborate Manner of explaining it, that he ſeems barely to propoſe each Point, together with its proper Sanction, and leaves it to ſhine forth by its own Light. 'Tis neither vers'd in any nice ſubtle Speculations, nor involv'd in pompous Paradoxes, nor adorn'd with Flowers of Rhetoric. We find it free from all Oſtentations and unnatural Flights, as well as from that Load of ſuperſtitious Rites, and ſlaviſh Ceremonies, which encumber'd every other Syſtem: conſiſting of ſolid and ſubſtantial Duties; containing general, comprehenſive Rules to try them by; and grounded on ſuch never failing Principles of Action, as muſt quickly enable his Diſciples

is perhaps too much the Caſe in moſt of our modern Law-*Forms*, where a long Train of Circumlocutions is very apt to cloud and ſtifle, rather than clear and aſcertain the Senſe; and which by ſhewing that ſo great a Weight is laid upon them, inſtead of avoiding, uſually tend to make a multitude of Difficulties. An Inſtance of Mr. *Chubb*'s Abuſe of one ſuch Diſcourſe of our Saviour's may be ſeen above, (p. 18. Not. [d]) the reſt have been ſo often anſwered, that a mere Engliſh Reader cannot eaſily be miſtaken in them.

to

to determine for themſelves, and judge aright in each particular Caſe: as in that of the *Sabbath*; which, like all other Solemnities, was inſtituted for the Sake of Man; and therefore ſhould be made ſubſervient to his Good [bb]; and in that to the Glory of his Maker, which are inſeparable from each other. In Meats and Drinks, and every Thing by conſequence of the ſame Kind [cc]; which, as being merely external Things, muſt likewiſe be of an indifferent Nature, and therefore could not of themſelves *defile a Man* [dd]. In that of *Oaths*, the ſeveral Kinds whereof were really of the ſame Import, as each including the ſame virtual Appeal to God, and therefore muſt needs be of equal Force, and ſhould alike exclude all fraudulent, evaſive Artifices [ee]. In that of *Vows*, which bind only to Things otherwiſe innocent at leaſt, and by which none ever could exempt themſelves from Duties of an antecedent, and perpetual Obligation [ff]: And by that univerſal Rule, of *Mercy* being preferable to *Sacrifice*, whenever a *moral* and a *poſitive* Precept inter-

[bb] *Mark* 2. 27. v. *Cleric.*

[cc] *Col.* 2. 21.

[dd] *Matt.* 15. 18. *Mark* 7. 15.

[ee] *Matt.* 23. 16, &c.

[ff] *Matt.* 15. 6. *Mark* 7. 11.

fere with one another [gg]. Such Doctrine muſt apppear, not only excellent in itſelf, and taken independently, but more eſpecially ſo in the Circumſtances under which it was deliver'd; as fully obviating the ſeveral falſe Maxims, and fallacious Gloſſes advanc'd by the *Jewiſh* Teachers of our Saviour's Time: in which reſpect it muſt be doubly uſeful, as an Inſtruction in Truths of the laſt Importance, and a Guard againſt ſo many popular Errors; and may be conſider'd as another Inſtance of his exquiſite Manner of accommodating Things both to the general Benefit, and the particular Exigences of his Hearers.

Laſtly, our Saviour's whole Diſcourſe and Way of arguing muſt carry ſomething of a peculiar Force and Pungency along with it, and be attended with extraordinary Degrees both of Conviction and Aſtoniſhment; as he knew thoroughly *what was in Man*, and therefore could ſpeak to his Heart directly [hh]; and *needed not that any Man ſhould* either *aſk* or inform him of any Thing: as he ſaw into the moſt ſecret Thoughts and Purpoſes of all thoſe whom he had to deal with, and often ſhew'd

[gg] *Matt.* 9. 13. 12. 7.

[hh] See Inſtances in *Clagett*'s Paraphr. on *Joh.* 7. 33.

them

them plainly, that he did ſo, by removing the latent Prejudices of his weaker Friends, and obviating their ſeveral Doubts and Difficulties, as they aroſe in their own Minds, before they durſt give any Intimation of them ‡; by anſwering ſuch Objections as had been made only in private, or at leaſt out of his Hearing; by refuting every plauſible pretence, and laying open the moſt artful Stratagems of his inveterate Enemies; detecting their Hypocriſy, expoſing their true Aim, and thereby cutting off all Poſſibility of Reply: On which account his Word muſt needs be *quick and powerful, and ſharper than any two-edged Sword.*—Many Inſtances of this will occur upon a diligent Peruſal of the Goſpels. Thus did *Chriſt* live, and teach; ſhewing himſelf as much ſuperior to the reſt of the World in each of theſe Reſpects, as he did in his Miracles.

There was a wondrous Man among the *Greeks*, who has been compared with *Chriſt*,

‡ Comp. *Joh.* 16. 19. 30. et *Cleric.* in *Joh.* 11. 22. This may perhaps be ſome Ground for applying the common Phraſe of *Jeſus anſwered*, when he is only beginning or continuing his Diſcourſe, and no ſort of Queſtion appears to have been aſk'd. *Matt.* 11. 25. 22. 1. *Luk.* 7. 40. 14. 3. 5, *&c.* See *Boyle* on the Stile of Scripture, p. 88.

and conſidered as a kind of *Type* of him to the Heathen [ii]; there being a great Reſemblance between them in ſome remarkable Particulars. *Socrates* lays out all his Time in going about to admoniſh and correct his Countrymen; with the utmoſt Firmneſs bearing all the Injuries, and deſpiſing the Affronts to which he was continually expoſed on that account. He conſtantly reſorts to Places of public Concourſe, and generally grounds his Diſcourſes on what occurs there. He chuſes a State of Poverty, to clear himſelf from all Suſpicion of private Intereſt, and make his Character more unexceptionable; he avoids meddling with the Affairs of the Public; declines Poſts of Authority amongſt them, as theſe in ſuch bad Times muſt have precipitated his Fate, before he had done them any conſiderable Service. He perſeveres in ſifting and examining them, in order to detect their Ignorance and blind Preſumption, and

[ii] *Marcilius Ficinus* atque *Symphorianus Champerius* in *Socrate Typum Chriſti*, ejuſque paſſionum ſibi inveniſſe viſi ſunt. Sed ut hi quidem plus quam decebat illi tribuunt, ita Virum fuiſſe ſummâ ſapientiâ præditum, qui providâ haud dubie Numinis curâ excitatus fuit ut ſuperſtitionis craſſiſſimæ tenebras diſpelleret, veramque Virtutis viam, quouſque rationis lumen pertingit, *Græcis* monſtraret, negari nequit. *Budd.* Hiſt. Eccl. Tom. 2. p. 859.

to

to mortify their Pride on all Occaſions; and declares that he muſt perſevere in the ſame courſe, even when he clearly foreſaw that the Loſs of his Life would certainly attend it [kk]. When merely out of *Envy* he is deliver'd up to his Enemies, and on a moſt malicious Proſecution brought to Trial; inſtead of having Recourſe to the uſual Way of Supplication, and applying to the Paſſions of his Judges, he proves to them that they ought not to admit of any ſuch Application; he informs their Reaſon, and appeals to their Conſcience; and proceeds only ſo far in his own Defence as would be juſt ſufficient to aſſert his *Innocence*, and ſhew them the great *Sin* of perſecuting and oppreſſing it. Inſtead of uſing or permitting any other Means to avoid his Death, he ſignifies that it was abſolutely free and voluntary in him, becauſe it was become neceſſary for the World; and meets the Inſtruments thereof with the utmoſt Calmneſs and Serenity. He left us nothing of his own in Writing, but took good Care, as he ſaid, to imprint Things deeply in the Hearts of his Diſciples; [which ſome of them deliver'd down to us, tho' in a Manner very different from that Simplicity and

[kk] *Xenoph.* Mem. L. 4. fin.

ſtrict Propriety, with which the Goſpels are recorded:] and, indeed, the Effects which his Inſtructions, and Example, had upon them were prodigious [11].

Some other Circumſtances might be pointed out, were we to draw a Parallel between theſe two, conſider'd merely as Philoſophers. But notwithſtanding any ſuch, and without derogating from the Character of *Socrates*, we ſtill may affirm, that he was far ſurpaſs'd by CHRIST, as well in the Importance of the Doctrines taught, as in the candid, clear, convincing Manner of delivering them; and in that Purity and general Perfection, which diſtinguiſh Chriſtianity from every other Syſtem.

Socrates deſcends ſometimes to trivial Subjects, and often trifles in purſuing others; neither attempting to give his Hearers Information in them, nor ſo much as pretending to have receiv'd any himſelf: he wraps up his Diſcourſe in ſubtle Intricacies, as beſt adapted to his principal Deſign of ſhewing Men that they knew nothing: he goes on puzzling and perplexing thoſe with whom he argues, and ſeems more ſtudious to confute what they maintain, than to eſtabliſh any Doctrine of

[11] Vid. *Charpentier*'s Life of *Socr.* p. 100.

his

his own: inſtead of clearing up their Doubts, and opening his whole Mind to them, he conſtantly makes uſe of captious Interrogatories to enſnare and draw them into Difficulties, and is ever mixing Ridicule and Satire with his Reaſonings: which, though it ſuited but too well with the general Turn and Temper of that lively People; though it afforded great Delight to ſeveral of his Followers, and ſerv'd to attach them the more ſtrongly to him; yet it was ſurely gratifying a wrong Taſte in them, and giving much unneceſſary Offence to others [mm]. But that was *Socrates*'s Talent: and his employing it ſo much has given great Occaſion for that Charge of Vanity, which ſome have brought againſt him [nn]. His *Method* of

[mm] Of this kind ſeem to be the Sneers on *Anytus*, about maintaining himſelf by privately working at the Trade of a Leather-dreſſer, which he had not a mind to own; which made that ſame *Anytus* become one of *Socrates*'s moſt bitter Enemies: And his perſiſting in reproaching *Anytus* on that Head, after Notice given him that the Action ſhould be withdrawn, if he would but forbear the mentioning it, was perhaps a chief Cauſe of the Proſecution being carried on with ſo much Pique and Violence againſt him. See *Stanley*, Hiſt. Ph. Part 2. p. 31. 33. 1ſt Ed.

[nn] Οτι δε δοξης ὲ χρη καταφρονειν της παρα τωι πολλων, Σωκρατης αὐτος, και μυρια φιλοσοφηι περι τουτου, δεικνυσι. παντα γαρ προς δοξαν ὁρων ἐποιει. και

εἰγε

disputing, however admired by his Contemporaries, and celebrated by most others since, must yet be own'd to admit of many Sophisms, to be calculated rather for confounding, than convincing an Opponent.

His *Dæmon*, whatsoever be understood by it, though upon some Occasions it should be allow'd to guard him and his Followers from Evils of some Consequence; on others, it seems to interest itself in very low Affairs, and which were hardly *Deo digna*; [such, as its giving them Warning not to go through a certain Street, in which they were to meet some Swine, and spoil their Cloaths °° :] Sometimes it seems to degenerate into downright Fanaticism; and, after all, perhaps, was merely Fancy or Fiction *. *Socrates* was very far from opposing either the superstitious Principles or Practices of the *Athenians* with that Freedom and Simplicity, that Openness and Zeal with which *Christ*

εἴγε των ἐκεινȣ λογων ἐμπειροι ἦτε, πολυν ἀν τον ὑπερ τȣτων ἐκινησα λογον, ϗ ἐδειξα πολλην παρ ἀυτοις την εἰρωνειαν (εἰπερ οἱς ὁ μαθητης ἀυτȣ λεγει πειθεσθαι χρη) και πως ἀπο κενοδοξιας παντα ἀυτῳ τα γραμματα την ὑποθεσιν ἐχει. *Chrysost.* Hom. 36. in Act. cap. 17. Ed. *Eton.* Tom. 4. p. 813.

°° *Plut.* de Gen. *Socr.* See a like Instance about *Crito*'s Eye in *Cic.* de Div. 1. 54.

* *Ouzel* Animadv. in *Min. Fel.* p. 154.

tax'd

tax'd thoſe of the *Jews*: on the contrary, he always conforms, and gives Countenance to them. He appears publickly to plead his own Acknowledgement of their Divinities, and Approbation of the eſtabliſhed Worſhip [pp]; both which were abominable: He performs his Devotion to the ſame Deities in private [qq]; and in his laſt Moments either betrays an Apprehenſion of ſome criminal Neglect towards one of them; or contents himſelf with continuing the ſame Strain of ironical humour in reſpect to them, which he indulg'd in other Subjects; or left the World uncertain what he meant [rr].

From theſe ſlight Strictures on a Character juſtly reputed one of the moſt complete among

[pp] Vid. *Plat.* et *Xen.* Apol. Comp. *Rollin's* Hiſt. V. 4. p. 260. Quis jam ſuperſtitiones *Ægyptiorum* audeat reprehendere, quas *Socrates Athenis* auctoritate confirmavit ſuâ? *Lactant.* de falſa Sap. L. 3. 19.

[qq] *Plat. Phæd.* in fin.

[rr] Perhaps after all his ſublime Speculations on the Nature of the Deity, *Socrates* might be as much in Earneſt in his Worſhip of the ſubaltern Divinities, in order to be on the ſafe Side, as *Cicero* ſeems to have been, when he gives his Wife Directions to make their Acknowledgement to the very ſame for his Recovery. Χολην ἀκρατον noctu ejeci. Statim ita ſum levatus, ut mihi Deus aliquis medicinam feciſſe videatur. Cui quidem tu Deo, quemadmodum ſoles, pie et caſte ſatisfacias; id eſt, *Apollini* et *Æſculapio*. Ep. 14. 7.

mere

mere Men, when it is placed in Oppoſition to that of *Chriſt*, 'tis eaſy to diſtinguiſh which has the Advantage. The ſame Thing would appear more clearly, were the latter to be drawn out at large, and ſhewn together with any other of the moſt celebrated Lawgivers and Teachers. But ſuch a comparative View ſeems to be little neceſſary to its Illuſtration. And I content myſelf with only touching on ſome few of thoſe remarkable Circumſtances in the Life of JESUS, which were recorded by his firſt Diſciples, as the *Signs* and Evidences of his being the *Son of God*; which brought ſo many to believe on him at that Time, and which one would think ſufficient to produce the ſame Belief (as indeed they have done with the Generality) as well as with the beſt and wiſeſt Men, in every Age.

THE END.

MVSEVM BRITAN NICVM

ERRATA.

PAg. 21. line 8. after *muſt be* add *by*.
P. 62. Note b. line 2. for *Salden* read *Selden*.
66 Note, line 13. read *Faith in*.
78 Note a. l. 1. for *pag.* 108. read 229.
80 Note a. l. 4. dele *that*.
96 Note 11. for *rational paſs* read *rational. paſt.*
104 Note a. l. 14. for 92 read 96.
138 Note m. l. 2. for πλειστον read πλειστοι.
112 * for 103 Note a. read 105 Note c.
114 * for 97 read 99.
122 Note b. l. 2. for 57 read 59.
126 * for 50 read 52.
133 l. 25. for ταυ' read ταυι. Ib. l. 35. after ισωθη for ; r ,
147 l. 7. for 84 read 88.
166 Note, l. 3. dele *and*.
168 Note, l. laſt, for 137 read 140.
174 Note p. l. 5. for *Sowth* read *Lowth*.
183 * for 58 read 55.
185 at the end of the Note n. inſert here the paſſage from Dr. *Edward*'s, placed in the Note below.
188 l. 5. for *ſee* read *ſay*.
227 l. 6. for *ſpread itſelf* read *ſpred itſelf from one centre.*—— and refer to the *very remarkable particular* in Dr. *Hartley*'s Obſervations, V. 2. p. 113.
243 * for 158 read 164.
244 * after *ibid.* add *p.* 167.
245 * for 169 read 177. Ib. l. ult. for 175 read 186.
247 Note b. for 175 and 181 read 186 and 193. Ib. Note c. for 182 read 196.
256 l. laſt but one, for] read). Ib. l. laſt, after *Hearts:* add].
276 ‡ for 170, 171, read 178, 179. Ib. † for 167 read 175.
287 l. 1. for *of* read *on*.
322 l. 5. for v. 9. read v. g.
328 Note 1. for Note *f* read Note e.
341 Note 9. for *muſt* read *moſt*.
348 lin. 12. for *oſtentations* read *oſtentatious*. Ib. Note 8. for *p.* 118. Note d. read *p.* 331. Note dd.
358 line laſt but one, after *Generality*, dele). Ib. line laſt, after *Men*, add).

BOOKS printed for and ſold by W. THURLBOURN.

DR. *Rutherforth*'s Syſtem of Natural Philoſophy, 2 Vol. 4to Price in Sheets 1*l.* 11*s.* 6*d*; where Gentlemen (that have ſubſcribed for it) may have their Books.

—— Eſſay on the Nature and Obligations of Virtue, 4*to*. Price 10*s*.

—— Two Sermons before the Univerſity of *Cambridge*, May 29, June 11. 1747. Price 1*s*.

Orationes duæ, una Demoſthenis contra Midiam, altera Lycurgi contra Leocratem, Gr. Lat. Notas addidit *J. Taylor*, LL.D. 8*vo*.

An Enquiry into the Foundation of the *Engliſh* Conſtitution, Price 5*s*.

Two Eſſays on the antient Greek Chronology, and on the Origin of the Greek Language. Pr. 4*s*.

The antient Hiſtory of the Hebrews vindicated, Price 1*s*. Theſe three by *Samuel Squire*, D. D. Archdeacon of *Bath*.

An Enquiry into the Rejection of the Chriſtian Miracles, by the Heathens. By *William Weſton* B.D. Fellow of S. *John*'s College, *Cambridge*. Price 6*s*.

Diſſertations on ſome of the moſt remarkable Wonders of Antiquity. By the ſame Author. Pr. 5*s*.

The Moral Impoſſibility of conquering *England*, and the abſurdity of the diſpenſing Power of the Pope, in three Sermons, Preached during the Progreſs of the Rebellion. By the ſame.

M. T. Ciceronis Epiſtolarum ad Familiares, Edidit & Commentariis Anglico illuſtravit, *Johannis Roſs*, A. M. Coll. D. *Johan. Cant.* Socius. Price bound in Boards 12*s*.

Q. Horatii ars Poetica, with an Engliſh Commentary and Notes. Price 3*s*.

Harmonicks, or the Philoſophy of Muſical Sounds. By *Robert Smith*, D. D. Maſter of *Trinity* College *Cambridge*.

Cotes's Hydroſtatical Lectures, publiſhed by Dr. *Smith*, 2d Edit. 8*vo*.

A Diſſertation on the Book of Job, its Nature, Argument, Age and Author. By *John Garnet* B.D. Lady *Margaret*'s Preacher, Fellow of *Sidney* Coll. and Chaplain to his Grace the Duke of *Devonſhire*.

An Eſſay on the Origin of Evil. By *W. King*, 3d Edition, with large Notes by *Edm. Law* D. D. Archdeacon of *Carliſle*.

The Elements of Algebra. By *Nicholas Saunderſon*, LL. D. Profeſſor of the Mathematicks in the Univerſity of *Cambridge*.

Puffendorf de Offic. Hom. per *Johnſon*. Ed. 3. 8°.

Sophoclis Tragœd. Gr. Lat. 3 Vol. per *Johnſon* 8°.

Excerpta e Statutis Academiæ Cantabrigienſis. Price 6*d*.

A Deſcription of the ſeveral Colleges and other Publick Buildings in the Univerſities of *Cambridge* and *Oxford* &c; as alſo of the Town of *Cambridge* and City of *Oxford*, with the adjacent Countries. By Mr. *Salmon*, Author of *The Modern Hiſtory of all Nations*. Price 1*s*. 6*d*.

A Sermon preached at *Biſhop-Stortford*, on *Tueſday Aug*. 22. 1749. the Anniverſary of the School Feaſt. By *John Taylor* LL. D. Chancellor of *Lincoln*.